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THE MODEL  
PRAYER

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C. A. MITCHELL



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# THE MODEL PRAYER

*And Other New Testament Studies,  
Expository and Devotional*

BY

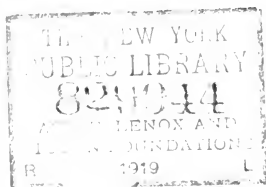
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To  
MY STUDENTS

with whom in the course of the years  
many pleasant hours have been  
spent discussing these and  
similar themes this  
little volume is  
dedicated



## PREFACE

These studies are an outgrowth of my work in Seminary instruction. They have been used in pulpit or on lecture platform. They seem to me to embody in a telling manner certain fundamental principles of the Christian religion and life. It is my desire in publishing them to give them more permanent form and, I hope, render them more widely useful. All helps accessible to me have been used in preparing these studies, and general acknowledgment of the use of such helps is here made. Some items of material and turns of expression in the fourth study (*Life's Record*) are derived from a suggestive editorial in *The Outlook* (see reading references). The translation of First Corinthians 13 in the sixth study was made from Tischendorf's Greek text. The sixth and seventh studies have been made popular in quality rather than technical or scholastic, in order to adapt them better to the use of the general reader. My study of Love, which was originally made many years ago, has profited in revision by reference to the rich body of materials brought together and discussed in Warfield's able and thorough study of the N. T. love terminology, just published in *The Princeton Theological Review* (see reading references). In the seventh study the Greek words are given first in

Greek letters, but for the sake of the average reader are thereafter given transliterated in English letters, and almost always in the form under which they appear in the dictionary, the inflectional requirements of the Greek being disregarded, as likely to be confusing to the general reader. A very few special reading references are appended for the sake of any who may wish to pursue the study of some of these themes further.

THE AUTHOR.

## A FEW SPECIAL READING REFERENCES

On Study I see Dr. W. R. Richard's *A Study of the Lord's Prayer* (Presbyterian Board of Publication, \$0.75).

On Study IV see editorial in *The Outlook*, 80:615-616 (July 8, 1905). Something of the secret, physiologically and psychologically, of the registering of our deeds in our character is popularly set forth in President Henry C. King's *A Fight for Character*. See also the modern psychologies.

On Study VI see Henry Drummond's *The Greatest Thing in the World*, and E. Daplyn's *One with the Eternal* (Longmans, Green & Co., \$0.35).

Study VII. Strangely enough, almost no easily accessible satisfactory literature on the distinction between *Agapao* and *Fileo* has been available. It is therefore very gratifying to be able now to refer the reader who wishes to pursue the study of Love further to Dr. Warfield's able and satisfying discussion of "The Terminology of Love in the New Testament," in *The Princeton Theological Review*, 16:1-45, 153-203 (Jan. and Apr., 1918), where numerous references to other and less readily accessible literature will be found.



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# THE MODEL PRAYER



# THE MODEL PRAYER

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## I

### THE MODEL PRAYER

An Exposition of Matt. 6:9-13

**P**RAYER is essential to the Christian life. A prayerless life would not be a Christian life. Jesus set the example of prayer; He commanded us to pray; and He taught a model form of prayer.

This form of prayer commonly goes by the title of *The Lord's Prayer*. Though we cannot now change established usage, this title is from several points of view a misnomer. The real Lord's prayer is found in the seventeenth chapter of John. The most suitable title for the form of prayer He taught His disciples would be *The Model Prayer*, and by that title we shall call it here.

Of the Model Prayer we have in the Gospels two reports, Matt. 6:9-13, and Luke 11:2-4. The latter may give the historical occasion when the prayer was taught, the former is somewhat fuller and richer in material, and will form the basis of our study.

On inspection, we find that the Model Prayer, in Matthew's form of report as it stands in our

A.V. Bibles, consists of three parts, viz., the address at the beginning; the doxology at the end; and a series of six petitions, which constitute the body of the prayer. We find further that these petitions fall naturally into two groups of three each, the first group being petitions for God's glory and the fulfilment of His will, the second group petitions for the supply of personal needs.

The Address—"Our Father, who art in heaven."

We note first that this prayer begins with *the right conception of God*. This is a matter of supreme importance. The character of any religion is determined by the idea of God which it cherishes. A right conception of God is essential to any worthy form of religion. If Christianity is the best and highest religion, as we believe it is, this is for one thing because it cherishes the best and highest idea of God. The Model Prayer teaches us to conceive of God as a *Father*. This was Jesus' characteristic designation for God, the Gospel report of His teaching containing this title for God not much short of two hundred times. This title I take it is a turn of expression designed especially to reveal *God's attitude toward men*. He has the attitude and disposition of a *father*, with all the love and tenderness and sympathy and readiness to help which fatherhood implies. And just think how much this means for the act and exercise of prayer. For our satisfaction and joy in the prayer-life it is indispensable that we think of God as a *Father*, who loves us, sympathizes with

us, pities us in trouble and sorrow, longs to comfort and to help, and to fill our lives with blessing. And so in the Model Prayer Jesus taught us when we go to God to conceive of Him and address Him as *Father*. And here it may be noted that this is the way Jesus himself addressed God in prayer (Matt. 11:25, Luke 22:42, John 11:41, 12:27, 28, 17:1ff., etc.). In fact Jesus' doctrine of prayer is only a corollary of his doctrine of God. If God is a *Father* Jesus' doctrine of prayer follows as a matter of course. One's idea of God and view of prayer are inseparable. If we find a man holding Jesus' view of prayer we may be sure that he also has Jesus' idea of God. And conversely, if we find a man's view of prayer differs from that of Jesus, we may confidently suspect that his idea of God also differs.

Again, as respects the address of the Model Prayer, we note that this prayer begins with *the right conception of man's relation to God*. If God is a Father, men are (or ought to be) His *children*. Jesus repeatedly called on us to be the children of our Father in heaven (e.g. Matt. 5:45). This is one of the dearest and tenderest thoughts of all Scripture. It means that we are to cherish toward God the attitude and disposition which ideally children would have toward a father. We must cultivate and maintain toward Him that reverence and love, and that spirit of loyal and trustful obedience, which constitute the essence of the filial spirit. If we can do this, we shall have the whole spirit and essence of Christianity for our

own. For God requires no more of us than that we should be His loving and loyal sons and daughters. How simple, and yet how profound and all-comprehensive this is. The true child heart is the fountain and source of all performance of duty, and includes and carries with it all that our Father in heaven requires. And the Model Prayer teaches that it is with such a heart we are to come to God in prayer. Only those can truly pray who are or who desire to be children of God.

And this gives us *the right point of view* for the interpretation of the Model Prayer, and indeed of all prayer. True prayer can be understood only as an expression of the heart of a loving and loyal child to the Father in heaven, revered and trusted. And we must seek so to understand the Model Prayer. There is no other way to understand it. We must try to remember this all through the exposition.

And still again, as respects the address of this great prayer, we note that it also includes *the proper relation of men with each other*. By the words "*Our Father*" it teaches us to recognize the sonship and daughterhood to God of others beside ourselves, and to include them in our thought at prayer. (Note also the plural "us" in the second set of petitions.) Now if we recognize their and our sonship to the common Father God, that means that they and we are *brethren*. So the very first words of the Model Prayer teach *the brotherhood of men*, and require recognition of this brotherhood in all true prayer. The Model Prayer indeed is full of

the spirit of brotherhood. Note the law of brotherhood in the later petition of the prayer, "forgive us as we forgive others" (Matt. 6:12, 14, 15, cf. Mark 11:25, 26, Matt. 18:21-35, etc.). A brotherly spirit toward others is essential to true prayer, just as essential as a right idea of God and a right attitude toward Him. I think we may learn from this that the man of unbrotherly spirit, who is hard and unforgiving toward others, cannot truly pray. At least he cannot sincerely and genuinely pray the Model Prayer. The teaching of Jesus abounds in commands that we should love our fellow men, and look upon them and treat them as brethren. To truly love God without loving men is impossible. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen" (1 John 4:20). Especially does the spirit of the Model Prayer require us, as we recognize God as our Father, also to recognize God's other children as our brethren. And so we have this commandment of Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also (1 John 4:21).

Thus the address of the Model Prayer teaches us three things, (1) the fatherhood of God to men, (2) the sonship of men to God, and (3) the brotherhood of men with each other. And these are three principles, which taken together constitute the essence of Christianity. The Model Prayer, therefore, and all true prayer are based upon and presuppose the whole spiritual situation which the Gospel calls for and was designed to

bring about. In the Model Prayer, as in all His teaching, Jesus directs us to establish right relations with God and with our fellow men, to cultivate a right attitude and disposition toward both, to develop and cherish *a heart of love* toward both, to recognize one as Father and the others as brethren and *act accordingly*; and if we do this we shall have the spirit which the Model Prayer breathes, and shall fulfil all the law and the Gospel.

We turn now from the address to the petitions. These, as has been said, are six in number, in two groups of three each, the first group consisting of petitions for God's glory and the fulfilment of His will, the second group consisting of petitions for personal needs. And just here we note that the petitions for God's glory come *first*, and those for personal needs *afterward*. It is characteristic of the loyal child of God that he thinks of God's honor first, and of self last. The promotion of his heavenly Father's glory is dearer to him than the supply of his own personal needs. In all true prayer God is magnified and self minified. And this because true prayer is an expression of a loving and loyal child's heart toward the Father in heaven. How true the Model Prayer is psychologically in the very order of its clauses, how lofty and beautiful the sentiment which pervades it, how noble and elevating the very atmosphere of its thought! How unselfish, how reverent, how devoted to God our heavenly Father, it calls on us to be. It challenges and inspires the best there is in us, and beckons us onward and upward to heroic endeavor and lofty



spiritual attainment. The self-centered life is a poor and petty thing at best. But the spirit of this prayer lifts us out of ourselves and opens to us the high and blessed possibilities of the God-centered life. By the way it subordinates self and exalts God the Model Prayer demands that our lives be *theo-centric*, *not* *ego-centric*. And thus it points us to the true way of attaining dignity and worthiness of life, which are found in renouncing self and yielding the life in loyal loving devotion to the service and glory of the Father in heaven. "He that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life" (by surrendering it to God) "shall save it." God can give us no glory apart from himself; but in our heavenly Father's glory we His children shall also find glory (cf. John 17:1, 4, 5.).

In passing we ought to remind ourselves how beautifully, how perfectly, Jesus himself exemplified in his life the spirit of the prayer He taught his people to pray. He was the model, the ideal, *Son* of God, and has left us a perfect example in this respect. In all things He utterly renounced self and made God central and supreme in His life. To Him the Father's honor was supremely dear. There were no interests so near to His heart as those of the Father he loved and revered. And so it ought to be with us, our heavenly Father first and foremost in our lives. Jesus also *lived* His prayer, and thus contributed to the fulfilment of its petitions for the promotion of the Father's glory. *His own life* constituted as it were an answer to His prayer. Shall not *we* strive to be like

him in this respect? It was *filial love* which dictated that group of petitions for the Father's glory in the Model Prayer. If such love prompts us to repeat those petitions sincerely, surely we too will strive to furnish some part of a positive answer to them in our lives!

But let us briefly consider these petitions separately.

(1) The first petition—"Hallowed be thy name." This petition is a prayer that God's name may be revered and kept holy by all, everywhere and always. It is a petition dictated by filial love. The Father's honor and good name are very dear to the true and loyal child. If we love God we will be jealous of His honor, and this petition, "Hallowed be thy name," so expressive of the spirit of sonship, will spring naturally and first of all to our lips, as it did to the lips of Jesus when He taught His disciples how to pray.

It is right, too, that in approaching God in prayer, we should recognize His transcendent greatness, and give Him the reverence and adoration which are His due. And this is done in the address and the first petition of the Model Prayer. It is most appropriate that prayer should begin with adoration. But in rendering this adoration we must strive to catch the highest point of view, which is that of the Model Prayer. A mere *creature* may give reverence and adoration to God as Creator. Or we might go to Him as subjects to a King. But Jesus taught us to come to God, not merely as creatures to a Creator, nor as subjects to

their King, but *as children to a Father*; and we shall miss the sweet and blessed spirit of this prayer unless we understand it in the light of this high and holy relation. God is our *Father* and has the heart of a father toward us. We are His *children* and have the heart and attitude of true and loyal children toward Him. And for *that* reason especially we give Him reverence and are jealous for His honor and good name. It is as *sons and daughters* of the Lord Almighty that we bow before Him and sweetly and reverently pray "Hallowed be thy name."

(2) The second petition reads, "Thy kingdom come." This petition recognizes God our Father as also *King*. He is indeed *sovereign* in His universe; but for mysterious reasons his sovereignty is not everywhere established. There are rebellious angels and wicked men, who reject God's sovereignty and resist His will. We His loyal children wish to see these enemies of the sovereign Father subdued, and His kingship recognized and established everywhere.

(3) The third petition, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," throws much light on the second, and may indeed be regarded as an explanation (epexegesis) of it. God's kingdom is the realm in which His will is fully done. We learn here that this is so in heaven, but we are keenly aware that it is not so on earth. And as loyal children we want our heavenly Father's holy and beneficent reign established *here* as well as in heaven. The two petitions taken together therefore mean

something like this, "May thy sovereign sway, O God our Father in heaven, be extended from heaven to the earth (where the adversary now rules, John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, etc.) so as to extirpate all wickedness, and make earth like heaven." This we know is in process of realization. The kingdom of heaven, planted by Jesus like a grain of mustard seed, has been growing from such small beginning, and is becoming a great tree, destined to fill the whole earth. And Scripture points us on to a time when, according to God's promise, the development of His kingdom shall reach its consummation, and there shall be "a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13). And the holy city, new Jerusalem, shall come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And a great voice out of heaven shall say, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God (Rev. 21:2, 3). And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be there, and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads; and there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign forever and ever (Rev. 22:3-5).

Truly when we pray "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we pray *according to the will of God!* And the answer to

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such prayer can never fail (1 John 5:14, 15). And so with joy we see our heavenly Father's kingdom grow on earth, and with happy confidence and glowing hope we pray and labor for its coming. And with the eager anticipation of the true child heart we look for and haste unto the promised future consummation of this kingdom, that "one far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves."

And now, before we turn to the second group of petitions, we must note that the true child of God as a matter of course includes *himself* in these petitions for the honor of his Father in heaven. He not only wants God's name hallowed by others, but *by himself*. He prays that God's kingdom may come and His will be done not only in other men's hearts and lives, but in *his own as well*. No one who does not heartily and fervently *include himself* in these petitions can honestly and sincerely pray this prayer at all. So Jesus, the model Son, proved his sincerity in praying for the Father's honor when in Gethsemane He accepted suffering and death with the words "thy will be done," words so sweetly expressive of the filial spirit. He who honestly prays the Model Prayer will also wish and work for the answer thereto to be realized in his own heart and life.

The second group of petitions, three in number, is for personal needs, as follows:

(4) The fourth petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." The first human need is *means of daily subsistence* (cf. Matt. 6:32). This means it

is God's will to supply as may be best for our spiritual life and the growth of His kingdom in our hearts and in the world. Our heavenly Father has a father's heart toward us in respect to all the needs of our nature, and wills that these needs be supplied and satisfied as may be best, all considered.

(The Greek word translated "daily" in this petition is probably related to a Greek participle meaning "oncoming," very common in the phrase "the oncoming day." The prayer seems to be conceived of as being prayed at the beginning of the day, for the supply of the needs of that day upon which one is just entering, thus "Give us today our bread for today." The Saviour does not expect us unduly to concern ourselves *today* about *tomorrow's* needs, Matt. 6:34.)

Thus we learn that it is right to pray for the supply of our natural earthly needs, such as food, raiment and shelter. But we must never forget that we go to God about these things as to a *Father*, recognizing His superior wisdom. We know He wants us to have what is needful. But we often *think* things are needful when they are not. The divine standard and the human standard of living often differ greatly. So when our prayers do not bring us all we may desire we must not jump to the conclusion that God does not answer prayer. All true prayer has as its point of departure "*if God will.*" The loyal child recognizes the superior wisdom and foresight of the Father in heaven, and prefers every request with the expressed or implied condition, "Grant me this, Father, *if,*

*all* considered, it will *be best* for me and for all concerned." We must remember that, in the Model Prayer, the petition "thy will be done" *precedes and conditions* the petitions for personal needs. These latter petitions are to be prayed always subject to that earlier petition. And this is as it ought to be. It is but another point in the beauty and correctness of this prayer. If it were not so, the prayer would not be *model*. The truth is that, though he may from the human point of view find it hard to have his requests postponed or denied, the true and loyal child of God would really prefer *not* to have anything granted to him which the Father in heaven knows would not, all considered, be best. Not always for his own sake, either, but sometimes for the sake of others or for the interests of the divine kingdom he may have to be denied. And in such cases reverently and lovingly does he fall in with the Father's aims and plans, and making God's will his will, he bows in glad filial submission to the superior wisdom of his Father in heaven, and says, like Jesus the model and ideal Son, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11:26).

(5) The fifth petition, "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." This petition also is vitally related to the third petition. Conscious of and sorry for the sin which mars his character and life, the true child asks his heavenly Father's *forgiveness* for having failed to fulfil all His will (cf. the third petition, and Luke 15:21). And at the same time, true to the spiritual relations

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presupposed in the prayer (see p. 14 f.), he exercises *brotherliness* by cherishing a *forgiving spirit* toward others. In the words of Andrew Murray, "As *forgiven* expresses the heavenward, so *forgiving* (expresses) the earthward relation of God's child."

Certain special points call for brief consideration here. (a) The correct word to use in this petition, if we are to preserve in our translation the figure in the original Greek, is the word "debts," and not "trespasses," which implies another figure. (In the parallel report in Luke 11:4 the word used is "sins," which involves still another figure.) (b) Request for forgiveness presupposes *repentance*; and repentance involves four things, viz., recognition that we have done wrong, sorrow for it, desire to make all possible reparation, and a firm determination never to repeat the wrong. Repentance is a right attitude of heart as respects wrong-doing, and is the pre-condition of all forgiveness. Without repentance there can be no forgiveness. Even God himself cannot forgive the impenitent. (c) Application of this truth to the forgiveness of those who wrong us. We are to love others, even our enemies, and have a brotherly attitude toward them. And this involves also an attitude and spirit of forgiveness toward them when they wrong us. Jesus vigorously emphasized this matter of brotherly forgiveness in that this is the only petition of the prayer commented on and enforced immediately after the prayer (Matt. 6:14, 15); in the beautiful parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt. 18:23-



35); and especially in the teaching that we are to exercise an *unlimited* measure of forgiveness toward an offending brother (Matt. 18:21, 22, "until seventy times seven"). But though forgiveness is to be unlimited, it is not to be, and indeed *cannot* be, *unconditional*. No man can forgive, God himself cannot forgive, the impenitent. Forgiveness is conditioned on repentance. "*If he repent, forgive him,*" said Jesus (Luke 17:3, 4). We must distinguish between a forgiving attitude and actual forgiveness. A forgiving attitude, a readiness to forgive, we must always have and cherish. But actual forgiveness cannot be accomplished unless the offending party is penitent. This is because forgiveness is a *mutual* thing. It has to be *accepted* as well as granted. And how can a wrongdoer accept a forgiveness if he does not recognize that he has done any injury, or is not sorry that he has? His attitude of spirit makes the accomplishing of the act of forgiveness impossible. So, while we must always have a brotherly and forgiving spirit, i. e., be *ready* to forgive, which is what we mean when we say in the Model Prayer, "as we forgive our debtors," nevertheless we cannot *actually forgive* impenitent offenders against us, because *they will not accept our forgiveness!* But what shall we do in such a case? Jesus has told us what to do. We are to go on loving and having a brotherly and forgiving disposition toward our injurer, and in every judicious and tactful way to seek reconciliation with him (Matt. 18:15, 16). But if he persists in his impenitent attitude and re-

fuses to accept our forgiveness, thus making actual reconciliation impossible, Jesus tells us all we can do for the time is to "let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:17). And this unhappy situation can be changed only by the repentance and changed attitude of the offending party.

(6) The sixth and last petition reads, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." This is but *one* petition, first negatively and then positively stated. The true child of God desires not only pardon for past sin, but *prevention of future sin*. Hence this prayer for the heavenly Father's help. Strictly rendered the Greek would read, "*rescue* us from the Evil one." In the A. V. the rendering, familiar to us all, is "deliver us from evil." But all the ancient fathers, whose mother tongue was Greek, and whose opinion on this point is therefore very weighty, understood the word for "evil" here as masculine and personal, not neuter and abstract; and its proper rendering then would be "the Evil one." This understanding of the words by the fathers may also have been determined by a tradition of their meaning, handed down in the early church from the days of Christ and the apostles, but nowhere recorded except in the opinion adopted by the early fathers as to the sense of this phrase in the Model Prayer. Both the English RV. and the A. RV. have, I believe rightly, adopted the translation "the evil one."

So the loyal child of God prays for rescue from

the Evil One, in order that his life may be ruled not by Satan but by God. Divine help is needed in order that, victory over sin having become *complete*, the Father's will may be fully accomplished and the status of sonship made perfect in us and in our lives.

This exposition has now covered the parts of the Model Prayer as Jesus taught it. The doxology, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen," which stands at the end of the prayer in our A.V. Bibles, was not a part of the prayer as Jesus taught it, nor a part of the gospel of Matthew as he wrote it. The form of the prayer as reported by Luke (11:2-4) has no doxology. In Matthew also the doxology is wanting in the best and most ancient manuscripts and other sources of the text. The earliest fathers did not recognize any such doxology. Thus Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian, who wrote commentaries on the Lord's Prayer, seem to have known nothing of the doxology. The early Roman liturgies do not contain it. It is not used by the Roman Catholic church at all, and has never been. It is found only in the later and less trustworthy sources of the New Testament text; and even in them its wording shows considerable variation, which in itself is a suspicious circumstance from a textual point of view. All considered, the evidence is overwhelmingly against the genuineness of this passage. We must conclude then that it is spurious, i. e., that it is not a genuine original part either of Matthew's gospel or of the Model Prayer. It

ought to be omitted from the text of both, and relegated to the margin, and this is just where you will find it in both the English RV. and the A. RV.

But if textually spurious, how came it into any copies of the gospel? The answer is that it was probably a liturgical addition, originally written in the margin of some manuscript of Matthew's gospel. Later, when this manuscript came to be copied, the marginal passage was mistakenly taken to be a part of the gospel text, and was ignorantly and innocently copied into the body of the text, and then this interpolated copy was copied, interpolation and all, and so the spurious doxology got into many copies, but only the relatively late and corrupt ones, and all very innocently and with no intention to deceive.

It was the custom in Palestine and Syria, first with the Jews in their synagogues, and then (under the influence of this example) also with the Christians in their churches, for the congregation to make a set form of response to the public prayers. The doxology to the Model Prayer was probably originally such a response, used by Jewish Christians of Syria and the East. It was quite certainly based upon the old Jewish doxology of 1 Chron. 29:11, which reads: "Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah, and thou art exalted as head above all." As already stated, it was probably originally writ-

ten in the margin, and thence got into the text. In relegating it to the margin the R.V.'s have simply put it back where it came from.

But if this doxology is not a genuine part of the Model Prayer, what about our use of it in worship? The answer is very simple. This doxology is Scriptural in content and of Scriptural origin. It has become consecrated by long usage and is in every way suitable for use. If we reject this form of conclusion to the Model Prayer, we should have to invent some other form, for the prayer without the doxology is liturgically incomplete. Indeed this may be the very reason why such a form of response came to be used with it. And perhaps it was taught in the brief original form by Jesus himself, with the understanding that the response ordinarily used in worship would be used with this prayer also and serve to make it liturgically complete. There is therefore not only no good reason for rejecting the familiar doxology from usage, but many of the best and weightiest reasons for continuing its use. Among other things, such an ascription of praise to our Father in heaven is very suitable on the part of us his earthly children.

And now it only remains for us to remind ourselves in conclusion, if we could but rise to the spiritual level of this prayer we have been studying, and have God's fatherhood to us and our sonship and daughterhood to him matters of living reality and joyous personal experience every day, how blessed it would be, and what peace and strength it would bring into our troubled hearts and our often weary and always needy lives!

## II

### THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

#### A Practical and Devotional Study

**J**ESUS, the founder of Christianity, brought the Christian idea of God into the world as something essentially new. Among the Jews, as the Old Testament shows, God is frequently given the title of "King," which very well expresses the idea of God cherished by the Jewish religion. This is the title commonly used even in the Psalms, the Old Testament book of devotions, where (if anywhere) a warmer title might be expected.

But when Jesus came, though he recognized God's sovereignty and kingship, he revealed a tenderer side of God's nature. The distinctive and characteristic title applied to God by Jesus is that of *Father*. In the Gospel report of Jesus' words we find the title *Father* used of God not much less than two hundred times, to say nothing of many indirect references to His fatherhood (as Luke 15:11-32). Thus Jesus brought a new and better revelation of the character of God, and gave us a broad and secure foundation for a warmer and worthier conception of Him. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he hath revealed Him*" (John 1:18). It is, of course, not the mere *title* that is significant,

but the rich and blessed conception of God and His love which Jesus meant to convey by it. The practical consequences of this new and lofty revelation of God have been beyond all computation, for the souls of men are ineffably elevated and ennobled by cherishing high and worthy thoughts regarding the supreme object of thought in the universe — God.

I have spoken of the revelation of God's fatherhood as *new* with Jesus, and so it was. But a word of explanation will not be amiss. For the designation of God as "Father" there is a slender Old Testament basis (see Exod. 4:22, Jer. 31:9, Mal. 2:10, etc.). But this was not the customary and characteristic designation of God in the Old Testament. Notably, as already remarked, it was nowhere applied to Him in the Old Testament book of devotions, the nearest approach being the simile of Ps. 103:13, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Moreover, in cases where the title was used in the Old Testament, it had not the same meaning as in Jesus' use of it. As Schultz says (*O. T. Theol.* 2: 138-139), in the Old Testament use of the title Father "nothing more is implied than in the term 'Lord'." This is well seen in such a passage as Mal. 1:6, "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts."

Manifestly in the Old Testament the idea of *fatherhood* had not become the *determining* conception of God, as it was with Jesus. His power,

transcendence, and holiness were emphasized, to the comparative neglect of the attributes connoted by fatherhood. To Israel God seemed a *King*, not a Father. The relation of men to Him was conceived of as legal rather than filial. It was reserved for Jesus to change all this, and to develop and give currency to the conception of God which makes Him a *Father*, in all the rich and tender significance of the term.

But to us personally it will make little practical difference that such a revelation of God has been made, and such a tender and an ennobling conception of His character and attitude toward men formed and taught in the world, unless we for ourselves grasp something of what it means, and order our lives accordingly. It is one thing for the doctrine of the fatherhood of God to be on the pages of our New Testaments, or a cherished possession of the church at large, and quite another thing for *us personally* to appreciate and cherish and feed spiritually upon and be blessed by this great and ennobling conception. If we could but rise to the level of Jesus' idea of God, and live daily in the realization and full and blessed consciousness that God is our *Father*, and we His *sons and daughters*, with all that such relationship implies, it would ineffably ennoble our souls and elevate and enrich our spiritual life. It will well repay us to spend some time in reflection, practical soul-searching reflection, with a view to subsequent action, upon *the implications of the Christian doctrine of the fatherhood of God*.

What did Jesus mean, what do the Scriptures



mean, in calling God our *Father*? Whatever else may be involved, certainly the title constitutes a revelation of the *attitude and disposition* of God toward men. He is disposed toward men as a father toward his children. That is, God is called a "Father" because He has a *father's* attitude and disposition toward us. No matter how we change, or how His dealings with us may have to vary, always, ideally and in infinite perfection, God is what a *father* is in heart and disposition. What a wonderful thought, how reassuring and attractive, that the infinite God, creator and upholder of all, "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders" (Exod. 15:11), feels toward us as a *father* toward his children, with divine pity, divine sympathy and tenderness! Surely if anything will encourage men to come to God, this thought will do so! Let us cherish it, proclaim it, magnify it, that *God, in His eternal and changeless Self*, has always the disposition and the *heart* of a *Father*!

Now the essence of fatherhood is *love*. The most distinctive thing about God is *love*, boundless and perfect *love*. Such love is not only His attitude and disposition, it is His *nature*. God not only *has* love, he *is* love (1 John 4:8, 16). He feels toward us all the sympathy, all the pity, all the tenderness, all the yearning desire for our highest well-being and happiness, which the thought of loving fatherhood implies. The first great item of meaning in the doctrine of the fatherhood of God is, then, that God *loves* us, and that too, as if to *us* a *father* loves. Beneficent, wonderful thought, how many a fal-

tering saint it has encouraged and sustained, how many an erring soul it has led like the prodigal to the saving resolution, "I will arise and go to my *father!*" Most beautifully did Jesus in his teaching describe the *fatherliness* of God. Not only are none who seek Him ever turned away, but with true fatherly solicitude He sends forth to seek and to save the erring and the lost (Luke 15:3-7). As the sun shines on all save those who shun its beams, so the Father in heaven extends His benefits and blessings to all (Matt. 5:45). No man need lack these benefits and blessings, unless he himself by his selfishness and sin excludes them from his own heart and life. With fatherly love God will bestow them on all who will receive. God's fatherhood is more perfect than any earthly parent's: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more* shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matt. 7:9-11). His fatherly care is greater, He knows what things we have need of before we ask him (Matt. 6:8, 32); and it is His will to add all these things unto us (Matt. 6:33). Even the very hairs of our heads are all numbered; and He who marks the sparrow's fall will not neglect the needs of His children (Matt. 10:29-31). His grace and forgiveness are inexhaustible, and the divine Father's welcome of the reclaimed sinner is touchingly portrayed in the beautiful parable of the earthly father's loving welcome of the returning prodigal (Luke 15:11-32). His benevolence *is* *truly universal*, so that even the unthankful and *us* share in the benefits of His

fatherly goodness: "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). The divine Father is *perfect* (Matt. 5:48), not grudging and partial, in His love. And, as Jesus taught, those who will be *like God*, true children of the heavenly Father, must love and seek to benefit and bless all, even the unjust and the evil. To love only friends and favorites is to remain on the low level of heathen morality (Matt. 5:46, 47). If men will be "imitators of God" (Eph. 5:1), they must love all men, even their enemies, and desire and seek to do them good (Matt. 5:44, 45). Only so can they hope to become perfect, even as the Father in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:48).

Since, therefore, our God is a *Father*, with a heart and a nature which are *love*, divine and perfect LOVE, what good thing can we lack, unless indeed in our selfishness and sin *we ourselves* exclude it from our lives by refusing to be our heavenly Father's children! And what higher form of religion can there be than the gospel of Jesus, at the basis of which lie the idea and the fact that God is a FATHER, whose very nature is *love*! Thus the first and in a sense the all-comprehensive implication of the Christian doctrine of the fatherhood of God is that *God loves us*. Another precious implication is that God will do all that is possible to *seek* and to *win* the wayward and the wandering ones. Such is the nature of fatherly love. It is not a *father's* way to neglect and forget the careless or rebellious child, to simply sit still

and let him go to ruin. A true father *loves* his child, and his heart yearns toward him even in his waywardness and wandering, and impels the father to seek in every possible way his restoration. And so exactly of the Father in heaven. He has a father's heart, and loves and longs for the wayward and wandering child. And in every possible way He follows the wanderer and seeks to woo and to win him back home again. What heart can be so rebellious and so hard as to resist the wooings and pleadings of the *divine Father's love*? What multitudes the assurance of that love has won back, like the prodigal, *home again*, to the Father's arms and the Father's bosom! That Father has followed us in all our sinful ways with manifestations of fatherly love. He gave His own dear Son to die in order that atonement and pardon for our sin might be provided. He sent forth His Spirit to reawaken filial feelings in our hearts, and to plead with us to return to God and reestablish filial relations with Him. And through His word, and His church, and His individual servants, and a thousand agencies, He has ever assured and reassured us that He *loves* us, and longs for our presence among His loyal children and in His, the *Father's*, house, our true and spiritual *home*. Verily it is but the simple sober truth that "there is *joy in heaven* over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:7, cf. 10). For this repentance means the *restoration* of a loved but lost child to the heavenly Father's home and heart! (Luke 15:32).

A third implication of this doctrine is that God

maintains a *fatherly sovereignty* over us. There is a natural and inevitable *authority* attached to fatherhood. This authority it is not only a father's right, but also his *duty*, to exercise. A father *ought* to regulate, to control, to *rule*, his children. He must do this wisely, lovingly, patiently, and for their good; but he must do it, or fall far short of his duty as a father. Have you ever observed the life of a family in which for some reason a father's authority was unfelt? What a loss to the children in such a family! The father was not rendering to his children all that he owed them. For children *need* for their own highest good to experience the authority and control of a *father* in their lives. From such experience alone can they learn that respect for law and that voluntary conformity or obedience to law which are essential to life and blessedness in this law-permeated and law-dominated universe of ours, a universe in which the motto of conduct is "Conform or perish!" and in which the unregulated and lawless do perish. Blessed be the sovereignty of fatherhood, whose beneficent discipline trains us to be law-respecting and law-abiding, and so fits us for *life* rather than death! Fatherhood represents law, authority, firmness, control. But it also represents broader experience, fuller knowledge, better judgment, wisdom, and above all *love*; and all these qualify and motive its sovereignty and make it beneficent. And though at times the father's regulation and control may seem irksome, yet the loyal child is through it all *glad* from the bottom of his heart that there is an effi-

cient and faithful father there, and that he therefore is not called on to shoulder all the responsibilities and face all the problems of his life alone, and thus is not forced to suffer the sad lack of a father's control and guidance in his life. And how ineffably glad and grateful we Christians ought to be at the thought of our Father in heaven, who takes a father's responsibilities and fulfils a father's obligations in this respect also, that He maintains a fatherly sovereignty and control in our lives, that He *regulates* and *rules* us, with infinite wisdom and divine and everlasting love, *for our good always*, in order that we His children may experience life and blessedness, and be saved from moral ruin and spiritual death!

A fourth implication of the great doctrine which forms our theme is that God our heavenly Father, in dealing with us His children, makes use of *fatherly discipline and correction*. The very thought of fatherhood implies discipline and correction, which are at times the only means by which fatherly sovereignty can be maintained, the child's conduct be properly regulated, his own and his companions' moral safety secured, and his character rightly developed. And the heavenly Father is not such a one as to be slack or unfaithful here. He will not shirk the unpleasant but essential duty of disciplining his children. He is not one to spare the rod at the dire cost of spoiling the child. God is a true and faithful *Father*. And, though the discipline of his children is perhaps the most unpleasant of all a father's duties, our heavenly Father does

not fail us here. "Whom the Lord loveth He *correcteth*, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (Prov. 3:12). Indeed the fatherly discipline is a sure token of sonship, for the Lord "scourgeth every son whom He accepteth." "If ye endure *chastening*, God dealeth with you as with *sons*; for what son is he whom a father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all have become partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons" (Heb. 12:6-8). The heavenly Father's discipline and correction are a sure token of His fatherly care and love, and of His recognition of us as His children, and as such ought to be received with real gratitude and joy. We must not "despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when we are rebuked of Him" (Heb. 12:5, Prov. 3:11). "We have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?" "For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure," with imperfect judgment and sometimes perhaps unworthy motives; "but He," with infinite wisdom and divine fatherly love, always and only "for our profit, that we might become partakers of His holiness" (Heb. 12:9, 10). And though "for the present," in the experience and the pain of it, "no chastening seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11). For several reasons, therefore, because they are a token of fatherly care

and love, because they are for our profit in making us partakers of the divine holiness, and because they develop rightness of character and of conduct in us, and thus fit us for life and blessedness, we are glad and grateful for our heavenly Father's correction and discipline in our lives.

A fifth implication of the Christian doctrine of God's fatherhood is that God our heavenly Father provides such *training and education* for His earthly children as to fit them for their future lives, and especially to develop them into His own ethical and spiritual likeness. It is one of the great duties of a father to *educate* his children, and thus *equip them for life*. True education gives us knowledge, brings us into adjustment with our world, develops our qualities and powers, and above all moulds us into right and worthy character. And these things God our heavenly Father aims to do for us by the course of experience through which He leads us. *All life is educative*, and all the life our heavenly Father will have us live is *rightly* educative. All the circumstances amid which our lot is cast, all the experiences through which under His providence we are called to go, all the agencies and instrumentalities and influences, personal or impersonal, human or divine, which touch and modify and mould our lives, are factors in the course of the ethical and spiritual *education and training* through which our Father in heaven seeks to have us acquire the knowledge that we need, and make beneficent and salvatory adjustment with our world, and fully and richly develop our capacities and



powers of service and enjoyment, and above all mould us into ethical and spiritual likeness of character to Himself. And thus He seeks to fit us for life, here and hereafter. In this His fatherly care and love are richly shown. The uneducated soul is unequipped for life, and must miss much of life's best, both in usefulness and in enjoyment. The rightly educated are equipped for life, whether in the form of service or of enjoyment. The course of training and education which God offers us, though not the same for all His children — there are different courses for different minds, and a range of election for all — is such as to fit and equip us fully and richly for *life, full, abounding, blessed* LIFE. This education immeasurably enhances our possibilities of joy and of usefulness; and we ought therefore with enthusiasm and joy to coöperate with our heavenly Father in making the course of our earthly lives as strongly educative and helpful to us, and as richly significant for our future, as He desires and intends it to be.

A sixth implication of God's fatherhood is that God *makes ample provision for all our true needs*, both present and future. The father is universally recognized as the natural *provider* for his children. This is an important part of any father's duty to his children. The father who *fails* to provide is generally regarded with aversion and contempt. God as the perfect Father cannot be derelict in the duty of a father to provide. He makes *ample provision* for all our needs. We do not, it is true, always get all that we *want*. Children seldom do.

It is not best for them that they should. It is likely to be ruinous to them if they do. But all our *needs* our heavenly Father amply supplies. We must distinguish between our wants and our real needs. He often, *for our good*, withholds something that we with childish lack of judgment want. But what we really need He always and amply provides. He knows what things we have need of before we ask him (Matt. 6:8, 32). Our heavenly Father feeds the very birds of the air; are not we His children much more the object of His care? (Matt. 6:26). "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him. O fear the Lord, ye His saints; for *there is no want to them that fear Him*" (Ps. 34:8, 9). Truly "they that seek the Lord *shall not want any good thing*" (Ps. 34:10). "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, *how shall He not with him also freely give us all things?*" (Rom. 8:32). Amply indeed does our heavenly Father make provision for all our needs, material and spiritual, temporal and eternal; our present needs by providential daily supplies, our future needs by the heavenly inheritance of the children of God. And where we seem to be denied needful supplies, it is but in the interest of His cause and kingdom in the world, and for our own highest good as well.

A seventh implication of this great doctrine of God's fatherhood is that God *protects* us against and delivers us from all enemies and evil powers. This is a rich and precious thought upon which we

have not space to dwell, save to commend it to your thought and to remind you that the father is the natural *protector* of his children, and that the Scriptures abundantly represent God as fulfilling a *father's* part in affording us *protection* against and triumph over all enemies and evil powers. For example, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7). "What shall we then say to these things? If *God* be *for* us, *who* can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). He will unfailingly defend us against all hostile powers, even against the treacherous evil of our own hearts, and in every conflict will enable us to come off "more than conquerors through Christ who loved us!" (Rom. 8:37).

The eighth and last of the implications of the Christian doctrine of God's fatherhood which can be mentioned here is that God has a *pleasure in and a desire for the presence and companionship of His earthly children*. This is a wonderful thought, that *God* cares for our companionship! And yet it is divinely true. It is involved in the very idea of fatherhood. A *father loves* his children. He misses them when they are absent, and takes pleasure in their presence and companionship on all appropriate occasions. And so it is with God our Father in heaven. He has a *father's* heart, a father's love, a father's pleasure in the companionship of his children. He loves to abide in us and have us abide in Him. He desires that we should have fellowship with Him (1 John 1:6),

and with one another (1 John 1:7), and daily walk in love, as dear children (Eph. 5:1, 2). The Scriptures abound in representations of our relations with God and with one another as being those of children with a father and with their brothers and sisters. Time forbids that we should elaborate here this beautiful and tender conception, which likens our relations with God and with one another to the affectionate associations of members of a *family*. It is however to be commended to your study as a thought which will give profound and touching significance to the everyday realities of the Christian life. And I ask you to try the practical plan of *cultivating companionship* with our heavenly Father through the medium of prayer, in the quiet hour and the secret place, with open Bible before you, viewing your prayer not as petition, as we so often do—a mere asking for favors, which is a low and unworthy view of prayer,—but as a means of *communion with God*, which is the highest utility of prayer, while through the prayer we confer and counsel and commune with Him, and He by His word and by His Spirit talks and communes with us, as a father with his children. Beautiful, wonderful experience, in which He manifests Himself to us as He doth not to the world, and in which we *get acquainted* with our Father in heaven, and come to know and to revere His will, and to realize and appreciate His love, and kindle and intensify an answering love in our own hearts! In thus seeking His presence and fellowship we not only are blessed, but by deporting ourselves thus as

true and loyal children we gladden the loving heart of our heavenly Father, to whom our presence and companionship are dear.

Thus perfectly, blessedly, with divine love and faithfulness, does God our heavenly Father fulfil all the duties and obligations of a *father* toward us. He is *the perfect embodiment, the acme and ideal, of fatherhood*. Like a *father* He loves us; seeks our restoration when we wander; disciplines, trains and educates us; beneficently and blessedly regulates and rules us and our lives; provides for us and protects us; and desires and enjoys our presence and companionship.

Now in view of His loving fatherly faithfulness, what *duties and obligations* rest on us His earthly children? Comprehensively it may be answered that, as His are the duties and prerogatives of fatherhood, so ours are the duties and obligations of *children*. What these are is well known. They include affection, reverence, loyalty, gratitude, devotion, obedience. These we owe to our Father in heaven. But special discussion must be given to one or two of the specially important and vital of our duties.

The first and really all-inclusive of our duties as children of God is that we *assume a filial attitude toward Him*, i. e., cherish toward Him the disposition and attitude which characterize a true and loyal child. The essence of the filial attitude consists in a beautiful combination of *reverence and love*, two indispensable sentiments of the true child heart. These sentiments are utterly opposed to all disre-

spect, all ingratitude, all disobedience, all neglect, toward our Father in heaven. If we have them they will lead us to honor Him, obey Him, appreciate His goodness and His greatness, to desire and cultivate acquaintance with Him, and to find pleasure in His presence and companionship, as He does in ours. In a word, our child-heart will answer perfectly to His father-heart, and there will be a due correspondence of sentiment and affection between us, and harmony and unity of wish and will, our wills in fact lost in His, and our aims and aspirations sanctified and exalted into unison with His. O blessed wonderful spiritual state, *in touch with God, at one with God!* To have companionship with *such* a Father is one of the high and holy rewards of genuine sonship and daughterhood to God. And the blessedness and the bliss of it are so great that we cannot, we *must not*, for anything in the world, neglect to seek and to cultivate it in our lives.

This is a part of what it means to have a *filial attitude* toward God the Father in heaven. How can such an attitude do otherwise than lead us to *revere*, to *trust*, to *love*, and to *obey* this gracious divine Father, and flood our souls with an ardent desire to fulfil every other duty toward Him?

But, lofty as this is, it is not all. We expect the child to *resemble* the parent. If we are to be true sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, we must *resemble Him in character*. This is the highest implication of our sonship and daughterhood to God, that we must bear His likeness in our character

and life. Through fellowship with Him and conformity to His will we are to *grow in His image*, to become holy as He is holy, and morally and spiritually perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:48). How lofty, how wonderful, the thought! As children of God, it is ours to be *God-like!* The ultimate essence of our sonship and daughterhood to Him consists in bearing His ethical and spiritual likeness in our hearts and manifesting it in our behavior. And such moral likeness is best summed up in our having a holy disinterested all-embracing *love* such as God our heavenly Father has (Matt. 5:45, 48), nay rather in our *being* of the same disposition and nature as He, which are LOVE! God our heavenly Father is the supreme standard and model of ethical perfection in the universe. And it is the supreme duty of men to assume the filial attitude toward Him, and to realize *an ever increasing likeness to Him in their characters and lives!*

And now, in conclusion, for a concrete illustration of the spirit of sonship to God I point you to the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the ideal and perfect son, in the fulness of the *filial spirit* which he showed, in his *reverence* and *love*, his unquestioning *trust* and unstinted *obedience*; even to Gethsemane and Calvary, the agony and shame, the cross and the tomb, He did not waver an instant from His Father's word and will. And above all in *resemblance of character* He realized the acme and ideal of sonship. So fully and perfectly was He like God that it could truly be said

of Him that He *showed us the Father* (John 14:8, 1:18); that He was the brightness of His glory and the express image of His substance (Heb. 1:3); and that he that had seen Him had seen the Father (John 14:9). Sonship cannot go beyond that measure of perfection which consists in such close resemblance of character that it becomes true that he who sees the Son also in effect sees the Father. O that we, who claim to be God's children, might be so God-like in character and spirit, so pure and true and loving and good, that those who see us would be reminded of our Father in heaven! This was indeed the case with Jesus, our Elder Brother and our *Example* (John 13:15, 1 Pet. 2:21). May we take *Him* as our inspiration and guide in our endeavor to cherish and perfect in ourselves the lofty and blessed condition of true sonship and daughterhood to God!



### III

## THE KEYNOTE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“ He Saved Others, Himself He Cannot Save ”  
(Matt. 27:42)

**T**HE Christian life is so comprehensive and many-sided that what shall be considered its *keynote* will differ as we contemplate it from different points of view. For the purposes of this study may I ask you to join me in contemplating the Christian life from the point of view of our relations as Christians to our fellowmen. The attitude of men toward one another, the relations of men with one another, constitute the subject matter of one of the most important and vital departments of our holy religion. The Christian life is largely concerned with one's feelings toward and dealings with his fellowmen. We may well give earnest heed to having these feelings and dealings right, for the Master gave impressive and repeated expression to the truth that we cannot be really and fully right with God without getting right with our fellowmen (e. g. Matt. 5:23, 24, 7:12, 6:14, 15, 18:23-35, etc.). The spirit of Jesus' teaching on this point is perfectly epitomized in 1 John 4:20, 21:—“ If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his

brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." Indeed one of the surest tokens of being right with God is found in earnest and persistent endeavor to get right and keep right with men. And, conversely, if one persists in a wrong attitude toward and wrong relations with his fellowmen, it justifies a suspicion that he is not right with God. It might be added that, according to the teaching of Jesus, it is vain to try to get right with God while continuing wrong with men; and that one of the most effective means of getting right with God is to put oneself right with men (the passages referred to above involve this). The sweet and fruitful communion and companionship with God the Father in heaven which we as Christians must cultivate, can be maintained only in case we are earnestly endeavoring to fulfil our duty toward our fellowmen. Since these things are so, it follows that we can very fruitfully contemplate the Christian life from the point of view of human relations, and try to catch its keynote and make it the keynote of *our* lives. Only so shall we find ourselves in harmony with the Lord Christ and his Gospel.

The secret of the Christian life on its manward side, as well as on its Godward side, is to be found in the life and example of the Lord Jesus. In all human relations, in all dealings with his fellowmen, he lived a perfect life, and gave us a perfect model for imitation. The *details* of his life we cannot of course fully imitate, for our lives

are circumstanced and conditioned differently from his. But the spirit and general quality of his life we *can* imitate, and indeed *must* imitate if we are to live really *Christian* lives. By Jesus and by his apostles the quality and the spirit of his life were expressed in *sayings of beauty and power*, which through the Christian centuries have become the motto and the inspiration of millions of noble Christian lives. One or more of these sayings ought to be adopted by every Christian as *the motto of his Christian life*, to be reflected on and lived up to as he endeavors to model his life on the Master's life, which the sayings pregnantly and suggestively estimate and characterize. A number of such sayings will be quoted in the course of this study, any one of which might be taken as expressing the keynote of the Christian life in human relations. In fact they all express essentially the same thought. But there is one estimate of the life of Jesus which has peculiarly appealed to me at various times through the years; and on this saying chiefly, on this particular motto of the Christian life, I invite you to center your thought at this time.

The saying I have in view was uttered concerning Jesus by his enemies. What one's enemies say of him may on occasion merit serious consideration. It may embody their estimate of his character and life. It may take its rise from and be based upon some obvious fact in his life. If so, it will be partially, if not wholly, true; and, so far as it is *favorable* to the person commented on, it will at least be *unprejudiced* testimony. Now, according

to the report in three of our Gospels, as Jesus hung on the cross, his leading enemies, the chief priests and scribes and elders of the Jews, derided him, saying, "He saved others, himself he cannot save" (Matt. 27:42, Mark. 15:31, Luke 23:35). Certain features of this saying, *in the sense in which Jesus' enemies intended it*, such for example as the essential untruth of one of its assertions, and the nature of the correspondence between the thoughts expressed by its two clauses, need not concern us here. I have worked them out and find that they in no wise affect the main line of thought which we are to follow. But in passing we may note briefly one interesting and for our purpose important point. In the first clause of the saying we find a great admission made, a great fact affirmed, concerning Jesus. He was one who *saved others*. This was his enemies' estimate of his life,—*He saved others*. What they meant by this is obvious from the Gospel story. He went about doing good. He brought deliverance and blessing to those whose lives he touched. He lived not for himself but for others. Even the malignant hate of his murderers could not deny this patent fact in his favor. The worst they could do was to try to distort it into a means of discredit and mockery. But the fact remains, their admission stands, surely a bit of unprejudiced testimony, that Jesus in his life was one who *saved others*.

But another aspect of the matter now claims our attention. It is not an unexampled thing, either in sacred or in secular history, that one's enemies

may unwittingly speak of him better than they intend. What Jesus' enemies said of him, in the sense in which they intended it, was only partially true. But in a sense not intended by them, their words were exactly and sublimely true. In this instance, as in many another, a sneering enemy has unconsciously uttered a sublime truth in favor of the one he sought to deride. In their very mockery, the enemies of Jesus proclaimed his divinely great unselfishness and heroism. He who had, as they admitted, *lived for others*, was now, as they failed to understand, in very fact *dying for others*. He who might have prayed the Father and at once have received more than twelve legions of angels for his defense (Matt. 26:53); He who could himself by a word have swept his enemies to destruction; He from whom no man could take his life, but who laid it down of himself (John 10:18); even He was now yielding himself up freely and unresistingly to shame and agony and death in order that he might redeem sinful and lost men from the death to which for their sins they were doomed. And without this sacrifice on His part they could never have been saved. Wonderful truth, proclaimed unwittingly even by enemies! *Truly* he saved others, himself he could not save. Just *because* he saved others, himself he could not save. *If* he had saved *himself*, he could *not* have saved *others*. It is his chief glory that he *gave himself for others*, that he freely chose to die in order that through his death they might be spared the death to which they were doomed for their sins. His blood on the cross,

mocked at in bitter hate by his spiritually blind enemies, was "the blood of the new covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28).

Thus unintentionally in their mockery of him Jesus' enemies uttered his loftiest eulogy. And at the same time, all unwittingly, they struck the *keynote* of his life. The whole aim and trend of his life was to serve and benefit others rather than himself. "He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). And for that very reason, just because he saved others, he *could not* save himself.

And further, all unwittingly, in their would-be mockery Jesus' enemies not only struck exactly the keynote of His life, but also revealed *what should be the keynote of every Christian life*. The true Christian's life must resemble Christ's life in all essential respects. It must have the same motive, the same aim, the same supreme passion to aid and to bless, the same *keynote*. And this, in final analysis, is simply that one shall live, not for himself but *for others*. That was the way Jesus lived, that is the way every true follower of His should live. *Not for himself, but for others!* This is the supreme law of Christian service. This is the essential quality, the *keynote*, of the genuinely Christian life.

"He saved others, himself he cannot save." He saved others at and by means of *the sacrifice of himself*. What higher praise could one ask than to have this truthfully said of him, in life, or in death? If it could be truthfully said of one, it

would mean that in this essential respect, he was thoroughly *Christlike*. It would mean that he had attained the high honor of being *as his Master* (Luke 6:40), and that in its essential quality his life was like Christ's life.

"He saved others, himself he cannot save." I like to look at the *mathematics* of this statement. The law of *quantity* controls here. A human life is a limited thing. There is only so much of it. And if you apply that "so much" in one direction, you cannot at the same time apply it in a diverse direction. A quantity used for one purpose cannot at the same time be used for another. For instance, if I am wasting a hundred dollars for selfish pleasure I cannot at the same time devote that hundred to promote the Gospel or aid the Red Cross. If I devote my time and energy and life primarily to advancing my own selfish interests, I cannot at the same time be devoting them to advancing the well-being of others. One who lives for himself cannot live for others. This is mathematically true, absolutely certain. Let no one delude himself respecting it, as I fear many try to do. It was Christ who said, "No man *can* serve two masters." And, since this is true, since a human life is a limited quantity and when applied in a given direction *cannot* at the same time be applied in a diverse direction, it follows that: if one would save others, he cannot save himself; which is only a way of saying that *in order to save others one must give himself*.

Let us pursue this subject a little further, in the

light of the example and the teaching of Jesus, and get if we can what may be called its *philosophy*. It seems to me that the Master penetrated to the heart of this subject when He said, "He that loseth his life shall save it" (Mark 8:35). His own example is the best illustration of the truth of his saying. What he meant was that the real way to make one's life worth while is to *invest it in the service of one's fellowmen*. He taught the same truth by the beautiful simile of the seed and its fruit. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). The seed must perish in order that the harvest may come; but in the harvest it multiplies itself thirty, sixty, a hundred-fold. So it is with human lives. *Investment of life in the service of others* alone makes it fruitful. If it be not so invested, "it abideth alone," forever alone, forever unproductive, an unworthy, a practically valueless thing, destined to pass into oblivion. The destiny of the selfish uninvested life is to perish as a useless thing, without progeny, without fruition, unloved and unremembered, as all useless things shall perish at last from God's great universe, by atrophy, by internal decay, by self-entailed degeneration and dissolution. "He that loveth his life shall lose it," said Christ (John 12:25). But "he that loseth his life," by investing it in the service of God and man, "shall save it." Such is the law, and so it is that the *investment* of life alone makes it fruitful and gives it a future. "He that hateth his life in this world," said Christ, "shall keep it unto



life eternal" (John 12:25). And herein lies the solution of an apparent discrepancy. The necessary *losing* of one's life, the assertion "himself he cannot save," relate only to the life that now is; while the allusions to the associated "saving" or "keeping" of one's life relate to the life that is to come. In this world the law is that one must *give* his life, *in order that* he may attain life in the world to come.

Now, to sum up, the investment of life in unselfish and loving service, *the putting of oneself into life*, is a form of *self-surrender*, of *self-sacrifice*. He who thus invests his life, *gives himself*. In order to invest our present lives worthily, we must *surrender* them. If we are to save others, we *cannot*, in this life, save ourselves.

And now, before illustrating the *application* of this principle in practical life, we must attend to three or four *qualifying considerations*. And first, to obviate possible misunderstanding, let it be noted that I am fully aware of and have carefully examined the apparent lack of exact logical correspondence between the two clauses of the saying about which our thought centers. Careful exegesis could not neglect such an item. It is evident that no rigidly exact logical correspondence between the two clauses was intended, and none need be sought. The same term, "save," is used in both clauses only for the sake of suggesting *relation* of the ideas expressed in the respective clauses. It is a *general* term, intended to be taken in whatever specific sense suits the thought in any particular application of the

saying. In other words, the sense of the term "save" in any given case is to be gotten from one's knowledge of the facts involved rather than merely from the term. The correspondence between the clause is *rhetorical* rather than strictly logical. It is just an artful device of language, similar in nature to a play on words. Other cases like it are found in the New Testament, particularly in the letters of Paul. From the logical point of view, though formally inexact, this mode of expression is materially sound and forceful. And in that it leaves larger scope for the play of individual thought and feeling, and appeals to the imagination and the emotions as well as the reason, it is more suggestive and stimulating than a rigidly exact form of expression would be,—as much more so as a bit of noble poetry or oratory is more spirit-stirring than a mathematical formula or a specimen syllogism. This tiresome explanation seemed necessary, as the correspondence will be recognized as being rhetorical and suggestive rather than rigidly exact and logical, throughout the study. And I shall feel free to substitute other forms of expression for the word "save" whenever it shall seem advantageous to do so. In general we may say that practically the thought conveyed by the words, "He saved others himself he cannot save," is the thought of doing others good at the cost of sacrificing oneself, or, more simply, *giving oneself for others*.

Again, be it noted, that if we are to invest our lives worthily, we must make sure that our sacrifice of self is sane and judicious, and that the specific

object of the sacrifice is well worth while. Self-sacrifice for adequate ends is wise and noble and blessed. But sacrifice of self for inadequate or unworthy ends is foolish and censurable. Unwise self-sacrifice is a *waste* of human life, the most precious thing at man's disposal. God would not have our precious lives *wasted*. He wants them *sacrificed*, but not *wasted*. Jesus' precious life was sacrificed on the cross, but not wasted; it was given to redeem a lost world. The *object* of our sacrifice must be *worth while*. "Whosoever shall lose his life *for my sake and the Gospel's*, the same shall save it" (Mark 8:35). Not *wasted* lives, but *invested* lives, are what the Lord wants. Let us make *this* investment with the care which the precious values at stake justly demand. Let us see to it that the ends for which we *give ourselves* are adequate and worthy.

Yet again, be it noted, that while the general end of the giving of self is the same for all, i. e., to benefit and bless others, we must remember that the specific objects and modes and times of the giving involve infinite variety and we must adjust our opinions accordingly. For each individual one of us God's will and plan are diverse, and we must not try to run all in the same mould. Because others do not invest their lives for just the same object or at just the same time or in just the same manner as we do we must not jump to the conclusion that they are not investing at all. We must not make the mistake of supposing that because certain others are not doing just the work that we

are doing, they are not doing anything. There are diversities of gifts and corresponding diversities of service. Christ is our judge, and to Him alone we are answerable for the investment of our lives. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth" (Rom. 14:4). We may well give due heed, according to the grace which Christ supplies, to make our own investment of life and service all it ought to be, and not concern ourselves unduly about the specific object, the manner, and the time, of our neighbor's investment; for the choice of time and manner and object lies, by Christ's appointment, in the power of each individual Christian. It is a part of each individual's own God-given sovereign personal right to make his own choice, a right with which others must not unduly concern themselves.

And yet again be it noted, that we must avoid limiting the application of the saying about which our discussion centers to cases in which the self-sacrifice involves immediate death. Such cases are after all exceptional and comparatively few. The extent of the immediate sacrifice depends on the nature of any given case. Sometimes death is involved, as in the case of Christ whence the saying arose. But in the majority of instances the sacrifice is not so sudden and tragic, but more gradual and commonplace. But it may be none the less real and heroic because gradual. Where sudden and sharp, the struggle lasts less long; but where gradual and quiet it puts one to the strain of *life-long* self-denial. In such cases, which are much the

more common, the *length* of the trial compensates for its lack of tragic sharpness, and may make it in reality *more severe* as a test of character and devotion,—especially so as the excitement and applause of the more dramatic struggles are lacking, and as there is abundant time for reflection and realization of what the sacrifice costs in the way of self-deprivation and self-surrender. Thus *all* sacrifice of self for others is beautiful and heroic, no matter how the various instances may differ. And we must not think of our saying as applicable only to the cases of sudden tragic sacrifice involving immediate death. These are truly worthy of all honor. But there are literally millions of cases in quite ordinary life where it is true of men and women that for Christ's sake they are saving others at the cost of *giving themselves*. Such cases of quiet unapplauded Christian heroism are far commoner than we think. We should have eye open and heart ready to discover and honor them whenever found. It would not be anything exceptional if unsuspected cases existed among our humblest acquaintance and friends.

When it comes now to *illustration* of the practical working of this principle of *giving self for others*, we find superabundant materials afforded by life about us on every hand. Of only a few conspicuous classes of self-sacrifices for others can mention be made. First, consider the case of *parents*. In many instances, it is true, parents live on with little effective attention to the duties of parenthood, and little real sacrifice for the sake of their

children. But in a host of cases, especially in modest Christian homes, if we could get at the facts, we should find parents surrendering without a murmur all their own personal ambitions and longings in order to give their children education and other advantages, and start them fully abreast of their times and with no handicap in the life-race before them. Many a father realizes that he must give up all thought of a future for himself if he is to do his full duty by his children, and devotes himself to toil day and night for their sakes, in order that they may be better equipped and have a better start in life than he had, until it becomes too late for him ever to realize any of his own fond personal ambitions. And to many a mother the days are but one weary succession of monotonous toil year after year, cooking, dish-washing, mending, cleaning, hanging out clothes, planning and scrimping and sacrificing, surrendering her own longings for ease and travel and culture, growing worn and old, and all for the sake of her boys and girls, in order that they may have the advantages that never came and never can come to her, and may thereby be better prepared for winning and holding a worthy place in the world. Such sacrifice is not commendable unless it is necessary; but in many cases it *is* necessary if the children are to have an advantageous start in life. No doubt there are millions of fathers and mothers in our own and other lands who are acting just that way, and making just that sacrifice, today. And of them all our saying is true. They are saving others, themselves they can-

not save. They are rendering a royal service to the world at the sacrifice of themselves. Through their well-trained and thoroughly prepared sons and daughters they are making an immense contribution to the future betterment of the world and advancement of civilization and of the kingdom of God. God alone can estimate the greatness of their service to their fellowmen, and the greatness and preciousness of its cost to these humble, toilworn, uncomplaining fathers and mothers. In its greatness their sacrifice is heroic, titanic! It is like the Christ, who *gave himself* to save a world!

Again, we might take the case of the devoted Christian *teacher*, who wears himself or herself out in moulding pupils' characters and preparing them for life, and whose chief service is not the giving of instruction, but the *giving of self*; for the true teacher above all *imparts himself* to his students and spends himself for them. Or we might describe the quiet Christ-like service of the faithful Christian *physician*, as is so beautifully done by Ian Maclaren in *Beside the Bonny Briar Bush*, under the title "A Doctor of the Old School." Or consider the application of this principle of *unselfishness*, of living not for self but for others, to the life of *nations* as well as of men, and combatting thereby the *unchristian, wholly barbarous*, doctrine that "the State" has no obligations save such as are dictated by self-interest, a doctrine which for more than three years now has filled the world with blood and sorrow, and which must surely be an abomination in the sight of the merciful God. *Why* indeed

should not *nations* as well as individuals have the Christian ideal, and the Christian program of living and working rather for the welfare of the world than for their own selfish profit and aggrandizement? Just as our own great country lost nothing in greatness, or in standing among her sister nations, by her generous and wholly disinterested treatment of Cuba and China, and other countries, in recent times. But space forbids elaboration of these points here, and leaves us room for only two more illustrations.

The first of these is the Christian *patriot*, who gives himself for his country. Patriotism is one of the purest and noblest passions of the human heart. In its unselfish and exalted character, love of country is akin to love of God. He who is actuated by it seeks not his own welfare, but the welfare of his country. This is true in times of peace, when disinterested statesmanship and pure citizenship are so sorely needed. But in times of war, as now, all the smoldering fires of love of country, which ordinarily may lie latent in the heart, burst into leaping flames and impel to prompt and heroic action. And this is preëminently true of young men, whose adolescent souls are aflame with passionate love of country. And at such times they say, as we have heard so many of our own boys say in the last few months: "I must offer myself to my country." And with pure and exalted devotion these adolescent youth go forth in defense of home and country and human liberty, sacrificing time and education and opportunity and position and all per-



sonal advantage at home, imperilling health and limb and life for the land they hold dear and for lofty visions of liberty and justice among the nations; by their sacrifice securing for others, yea for generations yet unborn, rights and liberties which they may never have known and may not live to enjoy. Often indeed is it sublimely true of the patriot that "he saves others, himself he cannot save." God bless our boys who do this! Most of them we trust will in due time return and take their place among us in carrying on the work of the world. All honor to them for what they do in behalf of country and human rights and liberty, though their sacrifice may be less in extent than that of some others. For there will be many who will not return. Their sacrifice will be of full extent. They will be called on to give "the last full measure of devotion." They will be listed among the *martyrs* of patriotism, who laid down their lives for the sake of liberty and country. They will earn and hold our gratitude forever. Time will not weary them, nor the years make them old. They shall live in our thought forever young, as they were in the bloom of their manhood when they left us on their heroic errand; even as Christ dwells forever in the thought of the world as a *young man*, cut off untimely in the midst of his years, it is true, but forever enshrined in grateful and loving memory as a *young man who gave himself to save others*. Of all of these whom we thus love and honor it is profoundly and grandly true that they save *others*, *themselves* they cannot save.

And because of this they are worthy of our undying gratitude and admiration.

Finally, what application has this keynote of the Christian life to the Christian *minister*? Of all men the Christian minister is one who must plan his life as a life of *service*. He must *dethrone* self, in order to make room for devotion to others. He must view life as opportunity to bless men in Christ's name and for Christ's sake. Every real Christian must do this; but the Christian minister in a peculiar degree. The projects he forms in the interest of his personal life must be held subject to modification or surrender, if need be, in the interest of the work he has to do for others. His central life-controlling concern must be, not self-advancement, but the benefitting of his flock. It is his to perform all the duties of a pastor, a *shepherd*, of his people. In all his multifarious service, the Christian minister is one who lives not for self but *for others*. Like Paul, he will very gladly *spend and be spent for them* (2 Cor. 12:15). Like Peter, he will *feed the flock of God*, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind, not as a lord over God's heritage but an ensample to the flock (1 Pet. 5:2, 3). Like John, he will conclude that as the Lord *laid down his life* for us, we also ought to *lay down our lives* for the brethren (1 John 3:16). And like the Master himself, he will feel that he is one whose business it is not to be ministered unto but *to minister*, and *to give his life for others*. Truly the Christian ministry calls us to a beautiful, heroic,

Christlike service, that of *saving others by giving ourselves!*

And so of all the heroes of Christian service. They save others by giving themselves. And this attitude and ability ought to be cultivated and nurtured from youth up. Devotion to the interests of others is a grace to be developed and made intense and habitual only by long cultivation. It comes to full maturity only by years of growth, and all the time demands due nurture and exercise. No one need fear he will begin this nurture too early. So I urge you, my reader, begin now and make it one of the chief aims of your life to cultivate the spirit and the habit of living *for others*. Look upon whatever advantages you seek for yourself in education and culture — and I would have you make these as full and rich as possible — as designed ultimately to enhance your service to others. Esteem the attainments you make in the course of your education chiefly as *means* of rendering yourself more efficient in life, and therefore *more useful to others*. From the habit of looking for and improving opportunities to be of service to your associates day by day, in order that in the future you may the more readily see and the more tactfully and effectively act upon such opportunities for service as life may throw in your way then. In seeking the presence and companionship of your Lord in the quiet hour, do so partly with the thought that you must know Him well because you are to lead others to Him. And when you engage in prayer let intercession and pleading for others have

due place, as well as petitions for self. Strive to abandon utterly the natural self-regarding attitude of unsanctified human nature, and make the Christ-like *other-regarding* attitude of the mature Christian character your own. Seek to have "the heart at leisure from itself, To soothe and sympathize"; and to be in yourself a living benediction to all about you. Pray the Lord not merely to give you a blessing, but to make you a blessing. Develop the disposition and the habit of *giving yourself*, sanely and judiciously, but really and fully, *for others*.

And now, in conclusion, let us consider that the *law* of this principle which we are studying *dominates all human life*. No one is exempt from its operation. It pervades individual, social, national, and religious life. Everywhere and for every one the price of the high and heroic, and of all that is really worth while, is the *giving of self*. He who would save others cannot save himself. He who saves himself cannot save others. In view of the law of quantity which rules in human life (see above), the "cannot" is absolute. There is no escape from the domination of this divinely appointed law.

I have often wondered what glory Jesus' deriders, who ridiculed him because having saved others he could not save himself, thought would come to a man on basis of the fact that he saved *himself* and therefore could not save others. This is the *converse* of our principle, the tragic truth that he who saves himself, *cannot* save others. How would you like that kind of a record to go

on the monument at your grave, as the epitome of your life's history: *He saved himself*, others he could not save! How would such an epitaph commend one to the memory of mankind?!! Better the cross with Jesus, than *such* a record, and *such* a memory!

How little life is really worth, unless it is *invested* in the promotion of some great and worthy cause, such as makes it contribute to the well-being of one's fellowmen and the onward march of the kingdom of God! The *uninvested* life is the talent laid up in a napkin by the slothful, ignoble soul whose one object in life is to make self safe, regardless of what becomes of others. INVEST your life, my reader, *surrender* it to God in the loving service of your fellowmen, and you will clothe it with worth and beauty, and transfigure it into something honorable and heroic. Nay more,—and herein lies a divine paradox, Christ-taught and Christ-exemplified,—by thus *giving* your life you will *make* it. *Self-renunciation* for the sake of others is, after all, the divinely appointed way of *self-realization*. This is the *reward* of the unselfish and Christ-like, who give their lives, their very selves, for others. It is all summed up in the Master's own words: "He that *saveth* his life shall *lose* it; but he that *loseth* his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall *save* it." God grant to you, my reader, the grace for *such* surrender, and the *joy* of *such* reward!

## IV

### LIFE'S RECORD

“What I Have Written I Have Written”  
John 19:22

THE trial of Christ was over. The long struggle between Jewish hate and Roman law was at an end, and Jewish hate was victorious. The Roman governor, notwithstanding the fact that Philo describes him as “inflexible in character,” had yielded at length to the importunity of the priests and the rabble, and against all his convictions of justice and humanity had given sentence in accordance with their wishes. The innocent Jesus was led away by the rude soldiery and the gloating mob to be crucified. Now it was that Pilate, angry with himself for his vacillation, angry that he had yielded to the demands of the Jews whom he despised, seized the opportunity to mock and insult them by posting on the cross of their innocent victim the words, “This is the King of the Jews.” These words were written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin, the three best known languages of the province, and proclaimed to every passerby that this friendless Galilean, perishing by this most painful and ignominious death, was to be regarded as king of the Jews—such a king only could they claim as theirs. Stung by the mockery and sarcasm of

this superscription, certain of them hastened to Pilate, and urged him to change the title so as to put the stigma not on them but on Jesus. But the governor haughtily answers, "What I have written I have written." That is the end of the matter. The title shall stand as originally drafted. In this minor point, at least, Pilate will display his firmness and gratify his odium for the Jew.

Thus much the words meant as they dropped from the lips of the Roman. But in the sight of God and in the light of history they have a far deeper significance. Of his *deeds* that morning Pilate might have said "What I have written I have written." He was making a *record*, which was to stand against him for all time. In all the remaining story of his life there is no such important entry as that he made when he failed to deliver the guiltless Christ from the hand of his enemies. No doubt Pilate was a competent enough governor in his way. He knew what was just and right on this occasion, and was disposed to do it. But he was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. And when confronted with the threat of the Jews that they would accuse him of unfaithfulness to the emperor; when thus his own personal interests and safety were at stake; he forsook the cause of justice, and let wrong and hate triumph. It is beyond question that in condemning Jesus Pilate deliberately and wilfully acted against the demands of his conscience and his office. He knew what was right, but for selfish and cowardly reasons failed to stand firm for the right. When con-

fronted by this great moral emergency, he dismally failed. And so the record of that April morning, scrawled hideously but in giant letters across the scroll of time, proclaims to each succeeding generation forever the cowardice and shame of the vacillating time-server who for his own unworthy and selfish ends, and in violation of all the convictions of his heart and obligations of his office, surrendered the guiltless Jesus to the brutal will of those who were thirsting for his blood. What an opportunity Pilate had to make a record of glory, had he but stood firm in defense of the innocent. But how far he fell below the possibilities of that hour! A record of weakness, injustice, dishonor! Himself identified with a mob of murderers! His hands, despite all his washing, imbrued forever with the blood of the Son of God! Yes, *what he had written he had written*. That record was not to be changed or effaced. That record pursued him through his life. That record has forever determined his place in history and in the estimation of mankind. His after years were hapless enough. A few years later he was deposed from the procuratorship of Judea, and sent to Rome to answer charges of misconduct in office. And there he drops from sight, so far as well authenticated report is concerned. He seems, however, to have been unsuccessful in his attempt to defend himself, and tradition reports that he was banished to Vienne in Gaul. Eusebius, the "Father of Church History," who wrote early in the fourth century, in his *Historia Ecclesiae*, Book II, chapter 7, on the authority



of certain unnamed Greek historians, tells us that in the reign of Caligula, eight or ten years after the death of Christ, Pilate fell into such misfortunes that at last in despair he put an end to his own life. Tragic record, traced in blood! Ineffaceable, unalterable! What Pilate had written he had written.

But has it never occurred to you that these words of the Roman governor would be true on the lips of any one of us? Have you never thought that this little sentence contains a universal truth regarding the members of the human family? Like Pilate, we are *all* writing our record. On the spotless pages of that book of possibilities, which God gave us when He gave us life, we are, each of us for himself, every day tracing out our own record. When we act or when we refuse to act; when we speak or when we refrain from speaking; when we think or when we drown thought in frivolous pastime: the lines of that record are still being registered faithfully and unerringly. Be we busy or idle, talking or silent, waking or sleeping, still the record goes down on the page, where it will stand forever to our honor or our shame. At the end of every day we may well look back over the hours, whatever may have been our occupation, and say "What I have written I have written."

To begin with, certain minor observations are to be made respecting this record. (1) The nature of the record. It embodies a history of our activities in life. Our record is the product of our doing. *Our conduct*, viewed as *the history of a life*,

*is our record.* (2) Observe that this record is of *our own making.* No one else writes it for us. You make *your* record, I make *my* record. What some one else has done is never a part of our record. Others' good deeds are never transferred to our record, our ill deeds are never shifted to their record. God's moral universe is guilty of no false book-keeping. You may have your record as clean and honorable as you like, for it is *of your own making.* (3) Observe also that this record is *self-recording.* The acts that are recorded are always and only our own; but we have no option as to their recording, if we do them. As we act or think, in whatever way, that very moment the deed records itself. You have seen the self-recording instruments in use at our weather stations. The needle charged with ink rests continually on the registering sheet, which is driven under it by clock-work; and let the mercury but rise or fall the slightest bit, or the wind shift its bearing a few degrees, and lo, the fact is recorded for the reading of the observer, and of all the world, for that matter. So the record of our lives is self-registering. The scroll on which we are to write is driven past us steadily by the wheels of time; and as it glides by the mysterious finger of our personal being, sensitive to every act and word and thought, even to our wavering sentiments and moods, records them all unerringly, for the reading of God and ourselves and all men. Do what we will, we cannot prevent the recording of our deeds. They *register themselves* at the moment they are done. The only way

we can prevent the recording of discreditable deeds in our record, is to refrain from doing them. (4) Observe in addition that this record is *complete*. Nothing is omitted. It includes *everything* we have ever done. The deeds of shame are there, as well as the deeds of honor. The secret acts of the midnight hour are as faithfully and as fully recorded as the acts done in the public square at noon-day. The most hidden and best concealed thoughts and purposes of the heart are as plainly written as the overt acts vaunted before high heaven. There is no exception. You and I have no option in this matter. *Every* act, whatever its character, is ineffaceably registered in the record of our life. No resistance, no concealment, no pleading, can avail to withhold the hand that writes. Not one syllable can be suppressed,—no, not one, though we implore and supplicate with tears of blood. Our record is a book which contains not only the absolute and faultless truth, but *all* the truth, concerning our deeds in life. It is complete in every detail, and we can only say “What I have written I have written.”

And here we turn to some of the weightier truths concerning this record.

1. This record is for each of us *inevitable*. Something must be written. How Pilate tried to escape the making of a record regarding Christ! How he strove to shift the responsibility to others! He sends Jesus to Herod, hoping thus to be rid of the matter; but Jesus is returned to him. He proposes to compromise by scourging Jesus, as a means

of appeasing the popular indignation, after which he will let him go; but the people wildly cry "Away with this man." He appeals to the custom of releasing a prisoner at the feast, hoping that Jesus would be chosen; but the people choose Barabbas. He solemnly washes his hands before the multitude, thus symbolically shifting the guilt of innocent blood to them (as if he could really shift it!); but they accept that guilt with the cry "His blood be on us and on our children." Pilate then, after scourging Jesus, brings the patient sufferer forth, wearing the purple robe and crown of thorns, so meek, so helpless, so wretched, in the hope of exciting compassion in the popular heart; but they cry "Crucify him, crucify him." So all is vain. No subterfuge can avail. Pilate *must make his record*. And he did make it. And there it stands, as enduring as the word of God which can never pass away:—"and he gave sentence that it should be as they required"; "and he delivered Jesus to be crucified."

It is a solemn thing to die. But is it not a far more solemn thing to come into life? Birth brings us into existence, from which as immortal spirits we can never get out. Being alive, we must live. And as we live, life's moral emergencies will come to us (as to Pilate), and we cannot escape the issue. Decision must be made, some course must be chosen. So, as we live, it is inevitable that our record should be made. Write something we must. It may be a record of honor, or of dishonor; of kindness, or of cruelty; of fidelity, or of falsehood. It may be

a record of right action, or of wrong action, or of no action; a record of speaking when we should have been silent, or of being silent when we should have spoken. But, whatever its character, it *must be made*. Thus life's record is for each of us *inevitable*. We make it as we live day by day. Could we realize this, surely we should be more careful what it is we are writing there.

2. Some of the entries in this record of ours are *of supreme importance*. The great mass of our record, it is true, is made up of ordinary events. For the most part, our lives consist of the commonplace and unimportant; and the bulk of our record is made up of the insignificant and uninteresting occurrences of every-day life. In most lives the days are very much alike:—the common round of duties, the habitual acts and experiences, are run through, and the day is over; and its record is simple and commonplace. Yet I would not unduly minimize the importance even of the humdrum of everyday life. For in the aggregate these common events may take on an immense significance for the formation of habits and otherwise in the moulding of character and the preparing of the soul for its hours of crisis. It is true, however, that the days in which something striking occurs, the days in which great moral emergencies are to be faced, are in most lives few. Pilate was called on to judge Christ only once in all his life. His life, like ours, was largely commonplace. His record, also like ours, contained only a few entries of extraordinary import for himself and for the world.

Over the greater part of our record we can look back tranquilly and say without emotion, "What I have written I have written."

But this is true and can be true only of the common and insignificant in our lives. Our record will contain at least occasional entries of supreme importance. These are made in the supreme moments of life, the moments of moral emergency and crisis. Such times must be faced by us all at various points in the course of our lives. However tranquil and commonplace our lives may for the most part be, there come moments to every one of us when happiness and destiny are trembling in the balance. Such was the hour when Pilate was called upon to act as the judge of Christ. No such opportunity would ever come to him again. His decision then would affect his whole future, would color all the remainder of his life. It was a question of his relation to integrity, to justice, to truth. Would he be true or false to the demands of right and the deepest convictions of his nature? Would he consent to the murder of the persecuted Jesus, whom he had pronounced innocent? But more than this was true. Pilate was called upon to decide his own personal relation to the mysterious being before him, who evoked wonder and awe and fear even in his pagan heart. And when the decision had been made; when the act of weakness and injustice and savage cruelty had been consummated; what a record went down against Pilate, publishing to all generations forever his infamy. And this record not only determined his reputation and place in

history, but forecast his destiny. In the record made that April morning one who could interpret life's deep laws might have read a prophecy of Pilate's end.

Just such supremely important entries must be made in *our* records. And they will color and determine all that follows. The great decisions and the great events in our lives determine all the rest. The country you select for your home; the business or profession you choose to pursue; the social alliances you make and maintain:—these are important decisions, which of themselves largely determine what the rest of your life is to be. So your answer to the moral and spiritual questions life asks you; the attitude you assume toward truth and temperance and purity; the relation which you decide shall subsist between you and Christ:—these are matters of supreme importance. They color all the less important features of your life. They determine the general trend of action and character for you. They long beforehand prophesy your future and fix your destiny. These supreme decisions make or mar your life. And in your record they will ever stand out, as if written in letters of fire, the first thing to strike upon your attention and the attention of the world. And in them will be found the clue to a just estimate of your character and a just measure of your life.

3. This record of ours is written *in personal character and personal destiny*. It is a record *in the souls of men*. In our own being and the being of others, there it is that our conduct is registered.

Pilate found it so. That act of cowardly injustice wrote itself deep in his heart, and marred the destiny of his life. And the baleful influence spread to all connected with that tragic scene, and stamped itself on heart and life. None were ever the same again. Pilate was a changed man; though perchance it did not at once appear to the world, it was apparent to the eye of God. And in his after-life and miserable end it became evident to all. Those priests were never the same again, seared and hardened by that stupendous act of hate and wickedness. Their destiny too was changed. On their heads now rested the awful curse of their own imprecation: "His blood be on us and on our children." And this was true of the mass of the Jewish nation. They might have been the chosen of God: but their own conduct sealed them for destruction. In the hearts and the destiny of that generation the record was written.

*Our* record is written in our own hearts. Our conduct becomes a part of ourselves. Our deeds record themselves indelibly in our character. We become what we do. The *causal* influence of conduct must not be lost from view. "I am what I am because I have been doing what I have been doing." Or in the words of the profound Spanish proverb: "Every man is the son of his own works." Ah, could we but realize before a deed is done how it will stamp itself upon our souls and become a part of us forever! Good deeds give our souls a trend and inclination toward good, and write themselves in our hearts. And sin writes



itself in our souls as it imprints itself on our faces. You remember how in Hawthorne's weird story the sin of Arthur Dimmesdale wrought a scarlet A in the flesh over his heart. To know what we have *done* men need but consider what we *are*. The wise can read this record. It is infallible, it is as plain as the sunlight. When we search our own hearts and interpret the story of our life recorded there, we may again say, "What I have written I have written."

But our record is not confined to our own character and destiny. It is written also in the character and destiny of others. Oh, this mystery of personal influence, by which we are so linked one with another! Our deeds sink into other souls and go to determine other lives. The character and destiny of the soul dearest to us may be determined by our acts. *Our record* will be written there. How the deeds of parents write themselves in the lives of their children! How the conduct of husband or wife engraves itself on the soul and reveals itself in the destiny of the life-mate! How the influence of friend on friend proclaims the character and acts of him who exerts the influence! Herein we are our brother's keeper. What is it we will write in the quivering tablet of his heart? *Our record*, written in his soul, goes to mould his character and determine his destiny. God grant you may never know the agony of reading your own influence in the life of some loved one to whom you, all unwittingly, it may be, have been a curse! Bitter, hopeless grief! And on the other hand God grant you

the joy of reading your record as a record of blessing in many lives!

4. This life-record of ours is *unalterable*. An entry made there can never be erased, or changed in any way. A deed once done can never be undone. It matters not how thoughtlessly or how impulsively we may have acted. The deed done in a moment of anger, the hasty word, the unreflecting thought, are all recorded as exactly and faithfully as the light prints a face on the photographic plate; and the record is there to stand unchanged forever.

Cain could not call back the spirit to the breast of his murdered brother. Ahab could not restore life to the bruised and broken body of Naboth. Judas could not change the fact that he had sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. Pilate could not clear his record of the infamy of his having condemned an innocent and holy man to a terrible death. Nor could Moses erase from his life-story the anger which dishonored God at the waters of Meribah. Nor could David undo his sin of adultery and murder. Nor could Peter, with all his penitence and bitter tears, wash out the record of his denial of Christ. These men could only groan, in hopeless remorse or grateful godly penitence, "What I have written I have written."

When we sin, the record against us is *ineffaceable*. The sin may be forgiven; but it must always remain a part of our spiritual history. No man can change, God himself cannot change, a fact of history. The deed, once done, slips from our power. The past is irrevocable, unalterable. It has flowed beyond

our control, it is gone, into the eternal years, bearing with it our record of honor or of shame. Solemn thought! How it ought to withhold us from sin! How it ought to restrain our unreflecting careless haste! How it ought to banish all frivolity from our minds! All we have ever done is unalterably and forever a part of our record. "What we have written we have written."

5. This record of ours is to form *the basis of our judgment*. We are told in the word of God that we shall be judged according to that we have done, whether it be good or evil. This is true even of the present life. In the eyes of men we are judged according to our deeds. Though the verdict may temporarily vary from the truth, it is ultimately correct. This human judgment is always correct when our record is fully known and fully understood. There is no other basis for rational judgment. The world will judge of us *according to our record*.

But there is another judgment to which conscience and revelation teach us to look forward; and there, too, *our record* will be the basis of the judicial decision. When we shall be called before the great white throne, and before Him who sitteth thereon, before whose face earth and heaven will flee away; when all the nations of the earth shall be gathered, and the sea and death and hell shall give up their dead; when they shall all come with us, both small and great, and stand before God; when **THE BOOKS SHALL BE OPENED**, and all of us judged *according to the things which are written therein*: then will it make no difference whether we have recorded good

or evil, as we shall review our unalterable past in the light of eternity, and the soul shall whisper to itself in deep inward murmurs, "What I have written I have written!" Happy those who make their record now with that dread hour of destiny in view! For from this record of ours we can never flee away. In our memory and in our character we shall bear it with us to heaven, or to hell!

And now to gather up the *practical lessons* of our theme. These differ to the young and to the old.

You who are still young, I beg of you to *take warning*. While the pages in the book of your life's possibilities are still largely unwritten, and white and clean as God gives them, *remember* that you can live your life and write these pages *only once*; and therefore *make the record fair and clean as you go*. For you can never live your life over again. You can never erase a wrong record, once it has been made. You can never substitute a worthier entry in its place. Once a thing is past, it can never be changed, but becomes unalterably and forever a part of your record.

"The moving finger writes; and having writ,  
Moves on; nor all your piety nor wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

All this is true,—profoundly, terribly true. Dear young friends, try to realize it and act upon it while still the page of life lies fair and white before you. God grant you earnestness and wisdom to beware of writing in the book of your record any-

thing that will ever cause you or any one else grief or shame! And, equally, God grant you the nobility of soul that will lead you to aspire to fill your record with the good and noble. But remember, you can do this only by filling your life with good and noble deeds. You cannot have one thing in your life and another in your record. The only way to get good and noble deeds into your record is to *do* such deeds day by day, as life brings you opportunity. So, in an adapted form of Charles Kingsley's words, I urge you:

“Be good, young friend, and let who will be clever;  
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long;  
And so make life, death, and the vast forever,  
One glad, sweet song.”

For us who are older the practical lesson must be somewhat different. The pages of our life-book are already mostly written. Some of us have few pages left on which to write before we go hence to face the record of our lives at the bar of divine judgment. Our past is what it is. What we have written we have written. That past we cannot alter now; not even God can alter it. It was once in our power, but it is so no longer. It simply is what we have made it, and must forever so remain. But in spite of this profound and terrible truth, there are for us a number of lines of comfort and of hope.

One of these is that whatever of *good* our past contained is forever a part of our record; and no one can ever rob us of it. The good in our lives is recorded as inevitably and unalterably as the evil.

The record is just and complete. All the good we have ever done is unfailingly there to our credit. In this thought we may find comfort.

Another line of comfort for us is found in the fact that the evil we have done, though ineffaceable and unalterable, and wholly beyond our power, may be *left to God*. There has been much of evil in every human life, and though we now deplore it we cannot blot it from our record, but realize with grief and shame that it must stand forever as a part of our spiritual history. And yet we have to remind ourselves that *the past is God's*, and we must simply *leave it to Him*. We ourselves cannot do anything with the evil of our past, except to leave it to God. That is the *only* thing we can do with it; and that is *the* thing to do with it.

But, when we leave it to God, what can *He* do with it? He cannot in any way alter the facts; but

(1) On the basis of the atonement which He himself provides He can *forgive* that evil, and bring us into reconciliation with himself, thus saving us completely from its guilt and condemnation. He is one who pities and forgives like a Father. Though our sin, like that of Judah, be written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond (Jer. 17:1), God has pledged himself that, if we seek pardon in His Son, He will remember this sin against us no more (Jer. 31:31-34, Is. 38:17). He will judge us only by the *Lamb's book of life* (Rev. 20:12, 15), if our names are but written there.

(2) Through some divinely instituted chain of causation He can save us and others from the natural and (without His intervention) inevitable consequences of our evil. Every evil deed is a *cause*, which inaugurates a series of results, each in its turn becoming a cause; and through this chain of natural causation our evil deeds would naturally and inevitably bring evil consequences to us or to others, did not God intervene and prevent. He alone can break the chain and avert the consequences which derive from and have their point of origin in our evil. And we may pray Him and trust Him to do this.

(3) By sovereign divine power, and through the mystery of heaven's own alchemy, He is able to bring good out of our evil, and constantly does so. Though this is no credit to us, for our sin was *sin*, yet the thought of God's turning it to good may comfort us. So the wickedness of Joseph's brethren in selling him into Egypt was used by God for good (Gen. 50:20). And so the envy and hate of the wicked Caiaphas, the treachery of Judas, and the cowardice of Pilate, were instrumental in bringing about the crucifixion of Jesus, i.e., his atoning death on the cross; and so by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23), out of the most awful crime in the world's history He brought about the world's redemption. So in the sins which have marred the record of our lives God may find a means of accomplishing good, though how this can be we may not understand; and in this thought and hope we may find comfort.

(4) But more than this is true. Despite the sins of our past the *present* is still by divine gift ours. God turns for us the leaves of our book, and gives us each day a new white page on which to write. It is worse than idle for us to waste the present time in vain regrets over the unalterable past. Like the anguish-stricken soul in the drama we may cry, "Oh, God, turn back the universe and give me yesterday." Vain prayer! The wheels of time turn backward never. The past is irrevocable, unalterable. Our record there simply is what it is, and must forever so remain. We *cannot* turn back and rewrite yesterday's page. Why should we try? The past is *God's*; let us leave it to Him. The present is ours; let us give all our energy to the white clean page that lies before us *today*, and strive to have naught written there but good. We need all our strength and wisdom adequately to meet the duties of *today*, and make its record fair and clean. God help us this to do, with chastened trusting hearts, while to *Him* we leave our changeless past with all its sorry record, and to *Him* the oncoming eternal future of our souls, with the judgment and the destiny that await us there. Though we have much to do with the making of our future, its ultimate issues are in God's hands. Only the *present* is ours, remember; the future and the past are *God's*. And may the thought that they are in our heavenly Father's power and keeping bring heavenly comfort to our souls!

And now in conclusion let me emphasize this thought of the *new* record. You cannot change an



evil past; but you can forsake it for a better future. Having left our past to God, in the belief and the hope that He will forgive its evil, and save us and others from its consequences, and even bring *good* out of evil, we may, indeed if sincere we *must*, forsake our evil past forever, and begin to write a *new and holy record*, the record of a *reformed* and *redeemed* life, in which by divine grace evil is absent and good triumphant, a record of salvation to us, and of blessing to others, and of glory to God! Only in such a record will there hereafter be no terror for us as we think, "What I have written I have written."

## V

### PATHWAY AND GOAL

#### An Exposition of Matt. 7:13, 14

Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.

When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

**H**OW eagerly men strive to pierce the veil which hides the future from their gaze, and to catch a glimpse of the *outcome* of their lives! Great sums

are paid to the diviner and the fortune-teller every year. And yet what advantage could there be in knowing that a certain destiny awaits one, meted out to him as it were by fate, if he himself could do nothing to help or hinder its coming? And the fortune-teller's forecast is a mere fake message, or at the best a shrewd guess.

There is, however, a sure method of forecasting one's future. *That* may be readily calculated by observing *the course in life* which he is following. We may thus know his future, if he continues to follow that course. This is not only the sure, but also the merciful and the practical method of forecasting futures, for it gives one a chance of choice as to what his future shall be, and puts it in his power to avoid, or secure for himself, a given destiny. This is the Scripture method of fortune-telling, intelligible, reasonable, merciful, infallible, based on profound and inflexible *principles*, or *laws of life*, which cannot be broken or set aside. This method of fortune-telling, which may be called the Christian method, finds one of its forms of statement in the words of Jesus which serve as the basis of this study.

These words of Jesus, and the other Scripture passages which stand at the head of this study, are confirmed by the experience of mankind through all the ages. Indeed they are at least in part an outgrowth of that experience; and are in profound and vital accord with the facts of human life. In them a vast amount of wisdom and shrewd observation is crystallized. They teach three or four *important principles*, which absolutely dominate life and its

destinies. These principles are now, each in its turn, to form the subject of our thought.

I. The first principle: One's pathway or course in life determines his goal or destiny. This goal or outcome of life is but a natural result, of which the course of life is the cause. There is the same fateful connection between a given course in life and its corresponding destiny as there is between a cause and its effect. Causes issue in effects, pathways inevitably lead somewhere. And not only so, but as a cause can produce only its appropriate effect, so a pathway can lead only to its own proper goal. The way that leads to the wilderness does not conduct one to the city. What one shall arrive at depends on the course he follows. For pathway determines goal.

This principle is so evidently true that it may fairly be called axiomatic. Indeed it must at first thought be obvious to all. It need not then be dwelt upon, except for the sake of emphasizing its practical importance, which unfortunately many do not sufficiently realize. An obvious truth will be of little use to one, unless he is sufficiently impressed by it to *act* conformably to it. Multitudes who desire to arrive at the right goal are pursuing ways which can never lead thereto, and thus are *acting* as if they failed to perceive the obvious and necessary connection between pathway and goal. Hence our first principle needs to be emphasized. It is of immense practical importance. It lies at the basis of many of the vital and fateful facts and relations of human life. The success and the happiness of men depend

on wisely taking this principle into account in the ordering of their lives. To the thoughtless it is a message of warning, to the earnest a message of guidance and encouragement. To turn us from wrong ways, to induce us to enter and persevere in right ways, it needs to be impressed upon us all repeatedly and with profound solemnity that *the outcome of our lives depends upon our pathway*, and that *our course in life determines our destiny*.

II. The second principle: Men do not, as a rule, directly choose their destiny, they only choose the pathway that leads to it. This is the way Christ presents the choice in the words that form the basis of our study. He does not say that men directly choose "destruction" or "life," but they choose the broad or the narrow way, respectively, which leads thereto. In so presenting the case He is eminently true to human nature. The majority of men are too thoughtless, too lacking in foresight, to look far ahead and make their choice of a distant destiny directly. Who is going to peer far down the future, and regulate his present choices by thoughts of a destiny twenty or thirty or fifty years distant? That would be high wisdom, truly; but it were vain to expect such a course from the majority of men. The present interest is too attractive, the present enjoyment too alluring, to be sacrificed for the sake of anything so remote as a far-off dimly-perceived destiny. The pleasures of the way absorb attention so fully that few men give thought to the *goal* to which the way must lead. Thus men as a rule choose the *way* rather than the destiny, failing to

realize that in choosing the way they are also choosing the destiny. This must be why so many choose badly. For what is at present the most attractive way may lead at last to the most undesirable goal.

From this point of view we may apparently arrange men in three distinct classes:

1. *The wise*, who see the connection between pathway and goal, and act accordingly. This is the select class, the one to which any earnest and thoughtful person would wish to belong. But this is also the class of which Jesus said that they are "few" (Matt. 7:14).

2. *The visionary*, who dream of the destiny they would like to attain, but are lost in the dream, and fail to walk daily and perseveringly in the appropriate pathway, by which course alone they could ever hope to arrive at the dreamed-of goal. The high hopes of this class of men are doomed to disappointment, because they fail to take the necessary practical steps to realize their hopes.

3. *The majority*, who are so occupied with the course of life they are following, its interests and events, its experiences and pleasures, that they either do not think, or do not care, about the destiny to which that course must lead. Of this class Jesus said that they are "many" (Matt. 7:13). They are, in fact, the majority of men, the *crowd*, who characteristically follow the course that happens to please them, without concerning themselves much about the destiny to which that course will inevitably lead.

Such persons need to be reminded that idle

thoughtlessness or reckless indifference regarding the goal does not break the connection between pathway and goal. This connection is *causal*, and cannot be broken. Pathway does determine destiny, whether men realize it or not. With any who choose wrong we must feel the due measure of sympathy. Mature persons who for one reason or another go wrong, it may be in deliberate carelessness or in a spirit of mockery and reckless defiance of the laws of life, command less of our sympathy, because they sin intelligently and in the face of light, well knowing the end to which the way they choose will lead. On the other hand our sympathy goes out keenly to those who choose the wrong way through ignorance or inexperience, not knowing to what end it will lead. This is the condition of the young, who are especially in need of sympathy and guidance. And the responsibility for the guidance of their young lives rests heavily on those older and more experienced persons who train or otherwise influence them.

Youth is truly the golden age of life, the period of possibility and of promise. But it is also a time of peril. For it is the formative period, when one's habits and sentiments are formed and his character developed, and the great decisive destiny-determining choices of life, or the fateful preparations for such choices, are made. It is largely in youth that the issues of life are determined. The earlier half of life, and especially the golden adolescent period from twelve or thirteen to about twenty-five years of age, is in a preëminent degree the *destiny-making* period.

What one does and is then usually determines his destiny. What you young people are now, in your youth, what your choices and your course through these fateful youthful years, will go very far toward determining what you are to be and do through all the future of your lives. One who follows a wrong course in his earlier years may do so with the intention of breaking away from it later. And indeed for a time he will have power to do this, though it is very foolish to incur the loss and the risk of walking in a wrong way even for a short time. But ability to make an effective change will not last indefinitely. Experience shows that a wrong course in youth may lead one so far astray that he can never really get back to the right course. Chains of habit bind one, his sentiments are firmly set, his character crystallized, his will enthralled, the magic potency of youth to transform self at will is lost as the years run by; and if this takes place while one is in wrong courses, he finds his ability to get right gone. Age is not so plastic as youth. When one is old he cannot do what he could have done when young. The results of his course in life bind him like the bands of Fate itself. He is then like one

“That all in later, sadder life begins  
To war against ill uses of a life.  
But these from all his life arise, and cry,  
‘Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put us down!’”

Should you ask *when* the power to change from the evil way to the good will fail, the answer must be, We do not know. It varies in different indi-



viduals. In one sooner, in another later, but in *all* at last. It is unsafe to count on its lasting to a given age. Many have run that risk only to find, like Dr. Jekyll in Stevenson's story, that when they tried to change and resume mastery of self for good, it was *too late*. Wisdom indicates that one should do the safe thing by getting into the right way early.

Hence, young friends, the time to choose the right way is *now*, and then you may be sure the future will be right, too. The connection between pathway and goal makes imperative the injunction, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy *youth*." Get right with God *now*, and you may hope to be right with him all your days. Choose the right way *now*, and walk in it during these early happy years, and it will make the later years, also, happy. You will find hereafter that when you chose God and the good you were choosing happiness and blessing, too. The choice of right course in life means the choice of right destiny. Heed the wisdom of the Christ as he, through the words that stand at the head of this study, urges you to enter in by the straight and narrow way that leadeth unto *life*. *Pathway determines destiny*. Never forget it. Heed the guideboards which divine love has posted to prevent you in your inexperience from making choice of a way that would lead to ruin. The character of the way makes it clear to what destiny it leads at last. And be assured that in choosing the way you are also inevitably choosing the goal to which it leads.

III. The third principle: The thought just expressed leads up to this principle, which may be stated thus: Choice of a certain pathway or course in life involves also the choice of the corresponding destiny. Or, otherwise stated, choice of goal is involved in choice of pathway. For every pathway has its own goal, inseparable from the pathway. This third principle is but a corollary of the first principle. Since pathway determines goal, it necessarily follows that choice of pathway is equivalent to choice of goal. What a pity that men do not realize this well enough to choose only the ways that lead to right goals! Yet surely they do not realize it, for we see multitudes choosing and following ways which can end only in ruin. To be sure, it is only the *way* they choose, and not the end, which they would not on any account choose. But in choosing the way they choose the end also, though that end be "destruction."

To illustrate: Probably no one ever directly chose a dope fiend's death as the goal of his life. Yet thousands in our land every year choose and walk in the way that leads to such an end. The continued use of morphine or cocaine or similar drugs can lead to no other result. What wonder that so many perish miserably at last! No other issue of their lives could be expected. In choosing the dope-user's pathway they choose the dope-fiend's end. For choice of pathway involves choice of destiny.

Again, few if any ever chose as the goal of their lives a drunkard's grave. Yet tens of thousands

every year choose and walk in the pathway that leads to such an end. That pathway may be entered when one takes his first glass of beer, or smokes his first cigarette, or begins association with evil companions. But whenever and however one enters it, he cannot continue to travel the course and avoid the goal to which it leads. For the way determines the goal, and to choose the way is to choose the goal.

Probably also few ever directly chose inefficiency and failure as the issue of their lives. Yet multitudes choose to follow courses which can have no other outcome. Idleness and shiftlessness are pathways which can lead only to failure. Careless and unfaithful effort makes one inefficient, and inefficiency leads to failure. Success is won by the exercise of such virtues as industry, accuracy and thoroughness. In doing his daily work incompetently one gradually becomes himself incompetent, and thus travels the way which issues in inefficiency and failure. No matter that one does not directly choose such an outcome for his life. *Indirect* choice is none the less *real* choice. To choose the course that leads to a certain end is practically to choose that end.

It is probable also that none have ever deliberately chosen *perdition* as their personal destiny. Jesus does not say that men directly choose "destruction"; but he does say that "*many*" choose and walk in the broad and easy way that leads thereto (Matt. 7:13). Millions, in fact, have walked and are walking in ways that can lead to no other goal. The courses in life which these have chosen are such as lead to moral and spiritual ruin. And in

choosing these courses they have also chosen that destiny. For choice of way is choice of goal. Among this class of persons are those who say, "Lord, Lord," but *do* not the things which He says (Matt. 7:21-23). In rejecting the way of faith and obedience, of earnestness and toil and sacrifice for Christ's sake, they are also rejecting final salvation. To them the Lord can only say at last, "*Depart* from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23). The way of self-will and disobedience which such persons have chosen does not lead to heaven, but to a very different destiny. It is a way which leads to the eternal ruin of their souls. And in choosing the way they, though indirectly, yet actually, choose the ruin too. For choice of way involves choice of goal.

These illustrations sufficiently point the lesson. This lesson is that wrong ways can lead only to wrong ends, and those who choose wrong ways must expect to arrive at a wrong goal. How easily men deceive themselves about the outcome of a course of sin! How they strive to cheat themselves with the fancy that, though they persist in sinful ways, the outcome of their lives will be good. But how delusive such thinking! It is as reasonable as taking the road to Nicaragua and expecting to arrive in New York. It is on a par with the argument that we may set a cause in operation and avoid its producing its appropriate effect. It is practically senseless to choose a wrong course in life and assume that the outcome will be or can be right. In order that one's goal should be right, his way also must be

right. Wrong way never led to right goal. Those who choose the wrong way must expect to arrive at the wrong goal; for choice of way involves choice of goal.

It is equally true that right way never led to wrong goal. If one's way is right, his goal also will be right. Hence the assurance those may have who are walking in the right way,— they will infallibly reach the right goal. The straight and narrow way which Jesus commended leads only to *life*. Walk in that way and you will infallibly attain life. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." If one is in the right way, he *cannot* arrive at the wrong goal. Thus the principle under consideration is full of *encouragement* as well as warning. One who is concerned about arriving at the right goal need only make sure that he is in the right way, and then the choice of goal will take care of itself. In fact, choice of goal is already made in choice of way. And if the way is right, the goal *must* be right. Hence the immense importance of being careful in choosing the course of our lives, for in that choice we also choose our destiny.

IV. The fourth principle is, that *the only way to arrive at a desired goal is to follow the pathway that leads to it*. Since there is a natural correspondence between pathway and goal, a causal connection which cannot be broken, one cannot choose his goal irrespective of his pathway. Goals lie at the end of pathways, and any given goal can be reached only by travelling the pathway *at whose end* it lies. Or,

to turn the thought the other way, pathways lead somewhere; and if one follows them, he can only arrive where they lead. Each pathway has its own appropriate end, and will lead him who follows it *to that end* and to no other. It is then wholly idle to choose for oneself a given destiny without also choosing the corresponding pathway. Thousands of human beings delude themselves daily in this respect. They choose for themselves a certain desirable destiny and dream of attaining and enjoying it in the future, while they are all the time travelling some wholly unrelated pathway, because forsooth that seems easier or affords more present pleasure. All such souls are doomed to disappointment. They will never attain the destiny they have chosen and dreamed about. It is not one's theoretical choices and idle dreams, but his *actual course in life*, that determines his destiny. These self-deluded souls can only attain the destiny that corresponds to the way they travel, the goal *that lies at the end of that way*, which may be quite the reverse of what they in mere fancy chose for themselves and dreamed about. How unreasoning, how senseless, to dream of attaining and enjoying one destiny, while all the time following the course that leads to another! It is the *course* that determines the destiny at which one shall arrive. Desired destinies can be attained *only by following the courses that lead to them*.

For example, a young man may decide that he will accumulate a competence for himself and family in old age. This is a worthy goal of financial effort. The pathway that leads to it is that of

enterprise, industry, and economy, summed up in the one phrase *good business management*. The experience of a shrewd and successful man in this line is described Gen. 30:43: "And (Jacob) increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses." But this prosperity and success are *explained* by another passage in the story of Jacob, which reads: "(For twenty years) thus was I: in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes" (Gen: 31:40). Jacob's arduous course in life, characterized by enterprise and economy and strict attention to business, burdened indeed with toil and care for twenty long years, sufficiently explains his business success. He attained a competence because he followed the way that led to that goal.

Contrast with this the experience of a business friend of mine who also dreamed of competence and ease as the goal of his business life, but who unlike Jacob took things easy by the way and indulged in the pleasures which would have been within his reach only *after* (*not* before) a full competence had been acquired. Thus for many years he travelled the pathway of extravagance and business risk, making his expenses so large as to drain away his means and prevent the growth of his capital. While conditions were favorable all of course went well. But bye and bye came business reverses and hard times, and my friend was hard pressed. If he had had a little more capital, a few of the thousands of dollars he had practically wasted in earlier years,

he would have weathered the storm. But his available capital was insufficient to carry him through, his extravagant ways had damaged his credit, and the outcome of it all was that he had to go down in financial ruin. He had no working capital left with which to make a new start, and was too old anyway to begin again. With tears in his eyes he said to me, "Friend, I am down and out, completely." His health had broken under the strain, too, and now he was old and ill and poor. And I tell you old age, ill health and poverty make a tragic combination. This man who had dreamed of competence and ease and comfort in old age was now old and poor and comfortless. But he had followed through his life the pathway that would naturally lead to such an end, and how could he expect to arrive at any other? So, however, it usually is; with fatuous disregard for life's stern laws men choose and follow a pathway, when they would not for the world choose the destiny to which that way inevitably leads. How necessary then to emphasize the truth that the destinies which men desire can be attained only *by following the ways that lead to them!*

A teacher of mine in college once said to me, "If you do not learn something while in school well enough to make effective practical use of it after leaving school, God help you!" And he was dead right. Shiftlessness and inefficiency during the period of preparation for life are pathways that lead to *failure* and its associated miseries. Few men choose failure as their goal in life; but many choose the pathways that lead to failure. Many a student, while dodg-



ing the severe disciplinary studies of the curriculum, the studies that make men thinkers and give them power, and while growling at the hard lessons, and "scamping" his work all he dares if he is to remain in school at all, and being content barely to scrape through by the grace of lenient instructors and thus to bear through life a really *unearned* degree, is at the same time *dreaming* of the great things he will do when he gets out into the world. But let him not deceive himself. The chances are that he will never do great things. He is following a pathway that leads not to achievement and honor, but to inefficiency and failure. And as long as one follows such a pathway, he cannot reasonably expect to arrive at any other goal. Men do not attain the destinies they dream of and aspire to, *unless* they follow the pathways that lead to them.

There are many who dream of occupying positions of trust and power, of administering great enterprises, and enjoying the confidence and admiration of their fellowmen. But such a destiny can be attained only by following the pathway of faithful and toilful utilization of present opportunity. One who neglects or "scamps" his present work is unfitting himself for doing any work well. He is disqualifying himself for larger tasks, nay more, he is unfitting himself for doing even his present work acceptably. He is travelling the way to incompetence, and to the distrust of his fellowmen, not their admiration. If one has been unfaithful in that which is little, who will entrust to him large interests? (See Luke 16: 10-12). If he has failed to administer well a small

trust, who will commit to him a great enterprise? Faithfulness in lowly station is the pathway that leads to promotion. As Christ put it in the parable, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:21f). What reason could there be in entrusting a great task, involving great and precious values, to one who has not shown himself competent to accomplish a small one? He who has failed in that which is little, will he not also fail, yea has he not actually *prepared himself* to fail, in that which is greater? (Luke 16:10-12). For surely unfaithfulness and failure are *not* the pathway to trustworthiness and success.

There are even those who sit and dream of attaining heaven, while they fail to travel through life the straight and narrow way that leads thereto. But here again the destiny cannot be chosen apart from the way. The only way to attain heaven is to travel the right and appropriate way. The only way to arrive at *any* desired goal is to follow the pathway that leads to it.

In concluding this division of our study we may lay down two eminently practical rules: (1) If you don't wish to arrive at a certain goal, *don't* travel the way that leads to it; and (2) if you wish to arrive at a certain goal, *make sure* you are following the course that leads thereto.

But perhaps you may have been thinking, There is nothing new in this message; its topic is old and obvious. Yes, it is old and obvious, but for all

that, none the less important. An idea does not need to be novel in order to be valuable. Perhaps the message may be partially new to some who will read these pages, or may serve to set some of life's stern facts in a new and helpful light. But the aim of this study is not so much to bring new knowledge to your minds, as to urge you to *act* on the knowledge you already have. It is one thing to *know* life's laws, and altogether another thing to *live* conformably to them. By living conformably to life's laws I mean making beneficent and salvatory personal adjustment to them. The purpose of this message is not to inform you of what you presumably already know very well, but to impress upon you the supreme practical importance of the admittedly well-known fact that one's pathway in life determines his destiny; and if possible to induce you to *act and live daily* as if you realized the solemn significance of this fact. The purpose is, to induce you, if you will heed the plea, so to order your course in life that you will arrive at a good and blessed goal at last. You cannot afford to act and live otherwise. It is no light matter to play with your destiny, either for the present life or for the life to come.

And so finally let me warn and urge you to be *careful* about the pathway you are following. *Be sure* it is one which leads to a right destiny. *Wide* is the gate, and *broad* and — for a long time, perhaps — *easy* is the way that leadeth to *destruction*; the down-hill road is likely to be easy. And the *crowd* is travelling that way, too: — “many there be which go in thereat.” But do you want “destruction,” in

one of its many forms, to be the goal of your life, *your destiny*? If not, *don't* choose this broad and easy way; for *that* is the destiny to which it inevitably leads.

The right way, on the other hand, is likely to be narrow and steep and hard; the path that leads to the heights, to honor and distinction and lofty achievement, the *up-hill* road, is not likely to be easy. It is likely to be lonely, too, for heroic souls are not overly numerous. "*Strait* is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it." But choose this way and follow it; take the heroic course as yours, conquer the difficult situation, attack and accomplish the repellent task, sacrifice ease and pleasure for high and noble ends, cultivate *the habit of mastery* in all that you do, be faithful in every trust committed to you, and day by day you will grow and wax strong and efficient, and when your day of destiny comes, be it soon or late, you will stand revealed as one who has *won* in the battle of life, and is worthy of the high plaudit, "Well done," and of a share in the joy of our Lord. But *remember*, you can attain this desirable destiny *only by travelling the pathway that leads to it!*

Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth:  
unite my heart to fear thy name.  
Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and  
know my thoughts:  
And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in  
the way everlasting.

## VI

### ST. PAUL'S LOVE CHAPTER

#### An Exposition of 1 Cor. 13

ANY lingering remnant in any one of the silly superstition that the number thirteen is unlucky ought to vanish forever in face of the fact that the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, containing also thirteen verses, is one of the finest chapters in the whole Bible, and one of the most wonderful passages in all literature. In exalted sentiment, poetic beauty, and spiritual power, it has few equals.

To expound such a passage worthily is a task of no mean proportions. I undertake it with all diffidence, with no thought of being able to rival the fine expositions of earlier days, such as Henry Drummond's noble reproduction of the sentiment of this chapter in his beautiful essay, "The Greatest Thing in the World." My aim is different, and more modest. Without any attempt to rival these earlier essays, we may yet undertake to do a useful thing for Christian people by giving them a popular interpretation (exegesis) of this great chapter, based on careful scholarship.

The aim of such exegesis is simply to define as exactly as possible the ideas expressed here by the apostle, and to set them in a clear and suggestive light.

Back of this chapter lies, of course, the history

of the Corinthian church. This church's membership (which was numerous, Acts 18:8, 10), although it contained a considerable Jewish element (Acts 18:8, etc.), and probably a modest proportion of Romans (descendants of the Roman veterans and freedmen settled in Corinth by Julius Cæsar in 44 B. C.) and of other non-Greek Gentiles, almost certainly was pre-vaillingly of *Greek* nationality. The atmosphere of their life was largely Greek. Greek traditions and customs, and the Greek spirit, predominated. The faults as well as the virtues of the Greek character were in evidence.

These qualities of character, along with the circumstances and life of the Corinthian Christians, constitute the *historical background* of the thirteenth chapter of the First Corinthians, and will be carefully taken into account in the following exposition. But, while we must not lose touch with the concrete setting of the chapter (the influence of which is evident in every verse), we must also avoid exaggerating its significance for the interpreter. For in this chapter the apostle, although never losing from sight the situation and needs at Corinth, has passed out into the fundamental and the universal, and presents aspects and elements of truth which are the same everywhere and always, and principles which are applicable to the life of all men, of whatever age and race.

The immediate occasion of the writing of this chapter was the discussion of the subject of "spiritual gifts," their nature and purpose, and the manner of their use at Corinth, which we find in 1 Cor.,

chapters 12 and 14. As Paul discusses these "gifts," which he presents as special endowments imparted to various individuals by the Holy Spirit of God (1 Cor. 12:1-11), and as he thinks of the grave abuses connected with the possession and exercise of these endowments at Corinth — of the unwholesome excitement; the vanity and selfishness of many; the childish preference for the showy and sensational rather than the substantial and useful; the unseemly disorders which disgraced the public meetings of the Corinthian Christians (1 Cor. 14:23, 33, etc.); the undue pride of intellect, with tendencies toward conceited speculation and philosophizing, and over-estimate for such gifts as "knowledge" and "wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:22, 8:1, 12:8, 13:2, 13:8-12, etc.): — as Paul thinks of these things, he is led to show the Corinthians "a more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31 b), a way wherein the true motive and atmosphere for all cultivation and exercise of spiritual gifts are found, that motive, that principle, without which the possession and use of any gifts, even the most exalted and wonderful, would be vain (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

This motive, this principle, is *Love*. This is the great love chapter of the Bible. With it we ought to compare John's praise of Love in his first epistle, 4:7-21. Paul and John are the great love writers of the New Testament. The former uses the noun and the verb for Christian love a total of one hundred six times; the latter, whose writings are considerably less in extent than Paul's, uses both words ninety-four times. These two men far exceed the

rest of the New Testament writers in the frequency of their reference to the supreme grace of the Christian character and life. It is no accident that they have written the love chapters, and that one of them is known as the "Apostle of Love." They agree in finding the motive principle of the Christian life in the *heart*.

Of the Pauline love chapter the great German commentator, Meyer, has said: "This praise of love — almost a psalm of love it might be called — is as rich in its contents drawn from experience as in rhetorical truth, fullness and power, grace and simplicity." Of it Principal Brown wrote: "The surpassing beauty of this chapter has been felt and expressed wherever it has been read, by persons of the most opposite religious views, and by those who can appreciate only its literary qualities." It is truly one of the literary and spiritual gems of the ages, and ought to be fixed in the memory of every one as an aid and inspiration to a better life.

As we approach the exposition of this chapter, let us first read it through in a translation made directly from the Greek for this study.

1. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

2. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all the mysteries and all the knowledge, and if I have all the faith requisite to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body in order that I may be burned, but have not love, I am profited nothing.



4. Love is forbearing, love is kind, love envieth not, vaunteth not herself, is not puffed up,

5. Doth not behave unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not irritable-and-ill-tempered, taketh not account of evil-treatment,

6. Rejoiceth not at unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth,

7. Beareth with all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8. Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away.

9. For we know in part and we prophesy in part;

10. But when that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away.

11. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child; since I have become a man, I have put away the things of the child.

12. For we see now by means of a mirror, obscurely, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know fully just as also I was fully known.

13. And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

As is obvious at a glance, the theme of this chapter is love, Christian love. What love is forms the subject of the next study, and no space will be used in attempting a definition here. What we should note here is that the chapter has three divisions, each with its own truth to convey concerning love, as follows:

(1) Verses 1-3, the *indispensableness* of love to the Christian.

(2) Verses 4-7, the *excellencies* of love.

(3) Verses 8-13, the *eternal permanence* of love.

The first division shows that without love there

can be no such thing as a Christian, no such thing as Christian character or a Christian life; the second division sets forth the wondrous character and excellence of love, here fairly personified; and the third division teaches that love is enduring and eternal, and never to be done away. And now we are ready for the verse by verse exposition.

Verse 1: — The speaking with tongues at Corinth was not a speaking in foreign languages, but an ecstatic inarticulate outburst of praise and prayer, unintelligible to any one who had not the gift of interpretation. It was a gift which readily lent itself to abuses in public meetings, and against such abuses Paul speaks at length in 1 Cor. 14. This gift was evidently immoderately prized at Corinth on account of its striking and sensational character; and the motive back of its exercise was too often personal vanity and selfish forgetfulness of the duty of benefiting others (1 Cor. 14:4, 6, 12–20, etc.). Paul's thought in this verse then is: Love which desires and seeks the profit of others is the supreme and indispensable motive for all worthy and acceptable seeking and exercising of spiritual gifts in the church. If I speak with all forms of ecstatic prayer and praise, even the most exalted and wonderful, with tongues not only of men but of *angels*, but have not *love*, I have become but sounding brass or a clanging cymbal — a mere dead instrument, without moral worth or real merit in the service of God or man.

Vs. 2: — The gift of prophecy here spoken of was not specifically the power to predict the future, but capacity for an exalted eloquent style of preaching

Christian truth. This was prized by Paul as an immensely useful gift, whereby the church was edified (1 Cor. 14:4) and unbelievers convicted and converted (1 Cor. 14:24, 25). The Corinthians prized it, too, but for other reasons; it ministered to their conceit based on the Greek love of the arts of the sophist, subtle dialectic and elegant and eloquent speech. Paul reminds his readers that even so exalted and useful a gift as Christian oratory, if not motivated by *love*, confers no real honor on the orator.

To know all the mysteries and all the knowledge there are to be known would be a very lofty form of the gift of knowledge (1 Cor. 12:8). This gift was much prized at Corinth, as would be natural among Greeks, with their pride of intellect. It seems to have had its natural effect under such circumstances, too, judging by Paul's pointed assertion in this letter that "knowledge puffeth up" (1 Cor. 8:1). Without love, however, the gift of knowledge carries no merit or credit with it, is indeed rather a spiritual peril than an advantage.

The faith requisite to remove mountains is not ordinary justifying saving faith, such as endures forever (vs. 13), and is common to all Christians; but is a special power conferred by the Spirit on certain individuals only (1 Cor. 12:9), who thereby become capable of doing works of wonder of one sort and another (1 Cor. 12:9, 10a, etc. cf. Luke 17:6, etc.). But without love this exalted gift also is spiritually valueless.

The thought of vs. 2 then is: With the noblest gifts of the Spirit, "the inspiration of a seer joined

with the intellect of a philosopher" (Findley), and with the whole heroism of faith requisite to the realizing of the seemingly impossible, but without love, I am *nothing*, i. e., ethically and spiritually of no real value whatever, utterly insignificant, a *cipher* in God's great realm of spiritual laws and spiritual life.

Vs. 3:— And if I do outwardly the very highest works of charity and sacrifice, such as bestowing all my possessions to help the poor, and even surrendering my own bodily self up to death in martyrdom, but have not love as my inward motive, I am profitted nothing, i. e., find for myself no reward, no spiritual and abiding gain (cf. Matt. 6:2, 5, 16:26, 1 John 3:14, etc.). Why should there be any reward, when the spirit of the deeds is selfish, and the motive self-glorification?

Here we may ask ourselves whether such cases as are described in these first three verses are merely supposed by Paul ("if," he says); or whether they are possible and do occur? Are not such cases possible, where men have many endowments and privileges, and yet never attain the essential and indispensable grace of character which alone gives value to life? With Meyer we must answer: They are possible, and "their possibility arises from the fact that, in the midst of the charismatic phenomena which made their appearance as if by contagion in the church, men might be carried away and rapt into states of exaltation without the presence of the true ground of the new inward life, the new creature." The warning gets tragic point from such passages as Matt. 7:21-23 (the Lord's own words), and Heb.

6:4-6, where privileges and endowments — the external and intellectual elements — are experienced, but *love* is wanting; and from such cases as those of Caiaphas, who although inspired to utter a prophecy yet hated Christ (John 11:49-52), and Balaam, who although inspired yet resisted the will of God and "loved the wages of unrighteousness" (see Num. chapters 22 to 24, 31:16, 8, with Rev. 2:14 and 2 Pet. 2:15, 16).

Thus we learn from these three verses that *love* is *indispensable* to the Christian character and life,— the type of character approved by God, the mode of life which alone is acceptable to God. Without the love that manifests itself in deeds of kindness and helpfulness, it is vain to claim to be a Christian at all. If one have not love, he is spiritually nothing. "He that loveth not knoweth not God" (1 John 4:8).

And here we turn to the second division of the chapter, vs. 4-7, where we have a *portrait of love*, personified, reflecting her power to edify (1 Cor. 8:1), "presented in short, definite, isolated traits, first positively, then negatively, then again positively, according to her own inexhaustible nature" (Meyer).

Vs. 4:—"Love is forbearing," i. e., in the face of provocations controls resentment and maintains her own proper character as *love*. Forbearance is a withholding of one's self from resentment and retaliation in the face of wrong. It is a great virtue, and fruitful of vast good where practised worthily and with proper motive.

"Love is kind," i. e., love has those sentiments of

appreciation, sympathy, good will and fellow-feeling, which we normally find between beings of the same blood or "kin," and which lead to action that is sympathetic and "kindly." *Kindness* and *kindred* naturally go together, in fact, the former is etymologically and normally an outgrowth of the latter. And since *love* makes all men brothers, we expect this great principle to move them to *brotherly* treatment of each other. This is what it means to be kind. It helps to understand what is meant when we note how *unkind* the *unloving* are. The "kind" person "acknowledges his kinship with other men, and acts upon it; confesses that he owes to them, as of one blood with himself, the debt of love" (Trench). Kindness is rooted in love; and it is *love* that is *kind*.

"Love envieth not," i. e., has no selfish passionate feelings toward others. The Greek word here translated 'envy' probably has a somewhat broader meaning (more general, less specific) than our word 'envy'; but the best we can do is to translate 'envy.' We must distinguish envy from jealousy. One is jealous of what he regards as his own, i. e., what is his own or he thinks ought to be his own; while one envies another the possession of what the envier acknowledges is not his own, and which he may not wish to possess. Envy is a peculiarly bitter and malignant passion, one of the worst known to the human heart. It is sometimes right to be jealous, but never right to envy. Love may be jealous of its own, as God is jealous of his people; but love can never *envy*, and envy could not be predi-

cated of God, who "is love" (1 John 4:8, 16).

"Vaunteth not herself, is not puffed up": love does not "show off," nor indulge in outward display; and equally love feels no inward arrogance or conceit.

Vs. 5:—"Doth not behave unseemly," i. e., love is guilty of no discourtesy or rudeness, but always exhibits *delicacy of feeling*, and due and kindly consideration, in her behavior toward others.

"Seeketh not her own": love is unselfish and self-sacrificing, and ready to yield her own for the sake of benefitting others. She is concerned rather about others' interests than her own. Love is ready to *give self* for others. (See 1 Cor. 10:33, 2 Cor. 12:14, 15, 8:9, etc.)

"Is not irritable-and-ill-tempered": love is not irritable and irascible, is not ill-tempered and quick-tempered, "does not become incensed," as the *unloving* do when offended.

"Taketh not account of evil-treatment": i. e., does not take account of the evil which others do to her, does not keep it in memory and cherish it against them. Rather, love forgives. It is love that covers a multitude of sins, 1 Pet. 4:8, cf. Matt. 18:21, 22. "Love in its essential nature is forgiveness, and that not of some but of many sins" (Huther). The word here translated "take account," is a word which has business associations and a commercial flavor, like the English word "account." It means to *keep account of*, to *charge to one*. Cf. its cognate form in Philem. 18, where Paul says, "charge it to me"; and vs. 19, "I will pay it." Thus love does

no book-keeping that is grounded in feelings of resentment and purposes of retaliation. Love cherishes no grudges but is glad to forgive and forget.

Vs. 6:—"Rejoiceth not at unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth." . . . Love's joy is here described as bound up with the triumph of right and truth. Love finds no pleasure in wrong or falsehood. And he who is ruled by love cannot be glad at unrighteousness or untruth, in himself or in others, no matter how much in a material way he may profit by it. For any material advantage bought at the price of right and of truth is too dearly bought. Love cannot be glad at such a bargain. Love wants one to attain the highest well-being, and is wise enough to know this can never be by the way of falsehood and wrong. Such is the relation between love and right that we cannot violate the latter and please the former. Love and right go together, and with them truth, and conscience, and God. And they all lay down the same rule of conduct for men. Work no ill to your neighbor, be true with him, do him no wrong, not even the negative wrong of failing to aid him in time of need. And love is thus the guide to right and truth and God. To follow her behest is to attain and enjoy them all.

Vs. 7:—"Beareth with all things," i. e., puts up with, patiently and cheerfully withstands and bears, all burdens, privations, trouble, anxieties, toil, hardships, etc., occasioned by our relations with others, and the duties and responsibilities of our lives. Thus Paul bore with all hardships and privations,



in order that he might not hinder the Gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 9:12). Love's capacity to bear with the trials and cares of life graciously and joyously is truly heroic. Love is a maker of heroes.

"Believeth all things": love is not distrustful and suspicious, but has a sane and wholesome trust and confidence in others. Love has a tendency to put on a neighbor's actions and words the best admissible construction. And, above all, love *believes in* others. And how wonderful the power of love's simple trust to impel others to live up to it! Love's confidence is a challenge to all the good there is in one. How many there are who make something of themselves in life just because some one *believes in* them! It may be a pastor's quiet faith in a wayward man, it may be a mother's trust in an erring boy. In any case, it is a confidence which *saves*. One cannot easily go wrong for good-and-all when there is some one who *believes in* him, because he *loves* him!

"Hopeth all things": love is characterized by a sane and reasonable optimism regarding the future, both of individual men and of life in general. Love is not pessimistic in spirit, but *expects* from individuals and from life *good*, and not evil. Love and hope go together, inseparable by nature. On the other hand, "what hope has the loveless life? What hope is his in the dark day of failure? His dreams have vanished and he is left alone to gloomy forebodings." But "love has no room for despair. Love smiles even when the tears are falling like rain. Love . . . never loses heart. Love meets the

mighty evils of the world and aflame on her banner is the morning star" (E. Daplyn). Love labors on, unfaltering, undoubting, sustained by an enduring and invincible confidence that all will yet be well; and for this very reason love is at last triumphant.

"Endureth all things": endurance is a bearing up without breaking down, a standing fast without yielding, under pressure of the evils of life (see Jas. 5:11, Matt. 24:13). One *endures* afflictions, sufferings, persecutions, cares and distresses, and all those features of our experience which may be described as heavy and burdensome, and calculated to break down our staying powers. And the stress and strain of such ills may be life-long. But here too *love* faileth not, but with heroic steadfastness *holds up* under the load of life, and so endures to the end.

On verse 7 Meyer says: "Note how the expressions *rise* as they follow each other in this verse, which is beautiful in its simplicity: if love encounter from others what may seem *too hard* to be endured, *all things she bears*; if she meet what may cause *distrust*, *all things she trusts*; if she meet what may destroy *hope* in one's neighbor, *all things she hopes*; if she encounter what may lead to *giving way*, *against all she holds out*."

And this brings us to the third division of the chapter, vss. 8-13, which set forth the imperishable eternal nature of love, as contrasted with the temporal and transient "spiritual gifts" which were so unduly prized and misused at Corinth. So men often fix their chief interest upon the incidental rather than the essential, the perishable and transient

rather than the enduring and eternal.

Vs. 8:— In this verse the “never faileth” is the opposite of “shall cease” or “shall be done away”; and the equivalent of the “abideth” of vs. 13. It therefore means that love is permanent and enduring. The “spiritual gifts,” appointed for the good of the church during a part or even all of her earthly history, are by their purpose and function and very nature *temporary*. Love, on the contrary, is as enduring as Christian character, as immortal as the saved soul, as eternal as God himself; for love “*abideth*” (vs. 13). And in the very nature of the case this must be so; for love is an indispensable element of Christian character, an element without which one would not be a Christian and could not attain salvation (vss. 1-3).

Vss. 9, 10:—*Proof* of vs. 8. The fragmentary, the partial, the immature, the imperfect, cannot be the enduring and the final. Present knowledge, present prophecy, are but fragmentary and incomplete, and as such are temporary. But the perfect is to come. And when it comes the partial and imperfect will pass away. Necessarily so. “With the advent of the absolute the imperfect finite ceases to exist, as the dawn ceases after the rising of the sun” (Meyer). So all our present knowledge is transitory and destined to be outgrown. And so the words of the poet are true:

“Our little systems have their day,  
They have their day and cease to be;  
They are but broken lights of Thee,  
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

Vs. 11:— *Illustration* of the thought of vss. 8–10. Our condition in the present time, in knowledge, habits of thought, etc., compared with what we are to be “when that which is perfect shall come,” is like the condition of a child compared with that of a man, like the immature compared with the mature, the rudimentary compared with the complete. “Fragmentary revelations, fragmentary inspirations to inarticulate praise, fragmentary insights into mysteries, corresponds only to the time of immaturity and imperfection; as childish utterances, aims, judgments, correspond to the time of childhood” (Massie). The figure suggests that as we pass into the age of spiritual maturity and completeness we are to *outgrow* present things.

On this verse Dr. Charles Hodge well says: “The feelings and thoughts of a child are true and just, in so far as they relate to the natural impressions of experience. They are neither irrational nor false, but simply inadequate. In like manner our view of divine things will hereafter be different from what it is now. But it does not thence follow that our present views are false. They are just, as far as they go; they are only inadequate. It is no part of the apostle’s object to unsettle our confidence in what God now communicates by His word and Spirit to His children, but simply to prevent our being satisfied with the partial and imperfect.” And especially to abate our pride in present knowledge, and encourage us to expect something better.

Vs. 12:— Justifies the illustration of vs. 11, as being truly illustrative of the thought of vss. 8–10.

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Herein also the conditions of present knowledge and of knowledge in the age to come are brought out more sharply.

“Now” means in the present age of the imperfect and partial; “then” means in the age to come, the period of consummation and perfection.

“By means of a mirror, obscurely”: Our present knowledge of divine things is not *immediate* knowledge, but comes to us through an imperfect medium, giving us a blurred outline, with many points of haziness or obscurity. We must think here of the imperfectly reflecting polished-metal mirrors of the ancients, not of our fine modern mirrors, which would not so well illustrate Paul's thought. Our present means of knowledge are indirect and imperfect, and the knowledge thus gained cannot be perfect and complete. Nor can it be final and enduring.

“Face to face”: of *immediate* vision, which gives *direct* knowledge. Such will be our knowledge in that age “when the perfect shall come” (vs. 10). *God* is conceived of as the object seen and known, as the last clauses of the verse show (see Num. 12:8, and especially Matt. 5:8, 1 John 3:2, 3, Rev. 22:4, etc.).

“Then shall I know fully just as also I was fully known”: In that future age of the complete and perfect “my knowledge of God will be so complete as to correspond to the divine knowledge which at my conversion made me its object” (Meyer). I. e., I shall then have a (relatively) complete knowledge of the divine nature, counsels, will, and ways, which

are known to me now only "in part" and indirectly. This likeness or correspondence of our future knowledge of the divine to the divine knowledge of us is, of course, only *relative* (not absolute).

"I was fully known": I became at my conversion the object of the divine recognition and apprehension. This sense is certified by the past (aorist) tense of the verb, and by Pauline use of the same expression elsewhere, e. g., 1 Cor. 8:3, Gal. 4:9. At one's conversion he "comes to know God" (Gal. 4:9, cf. John 17:3), but a more important fact is that he "is known by God" (Gal. 4:9), that is, God takes knowledge of him.

Vs. 13: — Faith, hope, and love are not, like the "spiritual gifts," transitory, but endure forever.

"Faith": is here not the wonder-working faith of vs. 2, but faith in the usual Pauline sense, i. e., *saving faith in Christ*, which in the world to come will continue as an abiding and inalienable trust in the eternally efficacious atonement of Christ. "The everlasting fellowship with Christ in the future age is not conceivable at all without the everlasting continuance of the living *ground* and *bond* of this fellowship, which is none other than faith" (Meyer).

"Hope": in the usual Pauline sense of hope of everlasting blessedness. "This abides for the glorified with regard to the *everlasting duration* and *continued development* of their glory" (Meyer). Such development is to be expected, since the future glory is essentially *life*, and life can hardly be conceived as *static*.

"Love": in the usual Pauline sense for the lofty

spiritual Christian love which is indispensable to Christian character and life (see vs. 1-3). This *love* forms the subject of the next study.

“Abideth”: the opposite of “shall cease,” vs. 8; i. e., continues forever. Thus Paul says that in the future age, into which the “spiritual gifts” will not continue, Christians will never cease *to believe, to hope, to love*. This is all the more evident when we consider that such essential elements of Christian character can never pass away, so long as saved souls endure. And so the three great Christian graces endure on into and in the everlasting life. *Faith* in God, *Hope* in Him, *Love* for Him — these also in and for our brethren — are to be part of the life of heaven; in their very *nature* they can never be done away but are *eternal*.

“The greatest of these is love” — love is greater because of higher value in practical use and service (1 Cor. 14:1-5, etc.). “Faith saves ourselves, but love benefits others” (Hodge). “Love gives faith and hope their highest value in redeeming them from self-centered aims” (Massie). *Usefulness* is Paul's standard of greatness. With him that is greatest which is most useful. So also with Christ, who taught that in His kingdom greatness is conditioned on usefulness (see Matt. 20:25-28). He who would be great in that kingdom must strive to abound in loving service and helpfulness.

In conclusion three remarks may be made. First, in interpreting this chapter we have to deal with some matters hard to understand, because the “spiritual gifts” largely are veiled in the obscurity

that attaches to endowments and experiences of the early Christians, "which then used to happen, but now do not occur" (Chrysostom). Second, love, although a "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22), is not to be regarded as a "spiritual gift" (charism), like "knowledge," "prophecy," etc.; for the "gifts" are distributed only to certain special individuals, while love is common to *all Christians*. And third, we must note and appreciate Paul's wisdom in centering religion in the *heart*. Religion becomes powerless when it magnifies the *intellectual* at the expense of the *life-controlling sentiments and emotions*. These are fundamental and all-determining; out of the *heart* are the issues of life. The *head* must not supplant the *heart* — for in the latter the eternal graces of *character* have their home. And supreme among these graces is *Love*, indispensable condition of blessedness on earth, and sure guaranty of happiness in heaven!



## VII

### A STUDY OF LOVE

THE vaguest ideas seem to prevail among us as to what Love, in the New Testament sense, Christian Love, is. This is unfortunate. For Love is the supreme grace of the Christian heart and life, and as such ought to be definitely understood by Christian people, especially those called upon to teach.

One reason doubtless for the vagueness of the concept "love" in our thinking is that our language provides only one word for all the wide range of application and shades of thought covered by this concept. Thus we say God "loves" men, the mother "loves" her child, the husband "loves" his wife, friend "loves" friend, we are commanded to "love" our enemies, a patriot "loves" his country, a dog "loves" his master, one "loves" to do a thing, etc. These are widely diverse ideas, all expressed by one and the same word, necessarily a vague general word. And constant use of such a vague general term tends to vagueness of thinking. Whether or not we agree that it would be a good thing to have different words to express these diverse ideas, it is at least evident that there can be no clearness of thinking until we discriminate these diverse "loves" each from the other, and give each its own definite and proper content of thought.

The sentiment, or emotional attitude of soul,

which we call love, is highly complex, involving in varying degrees a large number of factors or elements. In different cases of love one or another of these factors may become so prominent as to be the determining factor, while the others are present only in lesser degree, or one or more of them entirely wanting. Thus, according to their determining factors, diverse specific kinds of love may be distinguished. Love is a genus, of which there are various more or less clearly distinct species. It is our purpose here to describe some of these species of love, as an aid toward forming a definite idea of Christian love, i. e., love in the New Testament sense.

Ancient thought, at the time the New Testament books were written, clearly distinguished four main types of love; and the Greek language, in which the books were written, had four principal sets of words for "love," each with its own shades of meaning and special implications. Only three of these sets of terms are represented in the New Testament. It is, to be sure, the types of love themselves, rather than the terms employed to express them in New Testament times, that form the subject of our study. And owing to looseness of usage, and changes in usage from one period to another, there is no exact correspondence between the sets of words and the main types of love. Yet there is a loose general correspondence. The terms reveal the main varieties of love distinguished by the subtle mind of the Greek, and will serve as useful aids in our study.

The main types of love just spoken of were as follows:

1. The form of love based on sex and sex instinct, *erotic love, sexual passion*. Normally this love occurs only between male and female of the same species. It is not intrinsically a base or impure love, and must not be confounded with lust (Greek *epithumia*). Such love is natural and necessary in the life of mankind (whom God made "male and female"), and entirely proper between husband and wife, young man and maiden (as lovers); but should not occur between father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister, uncle and niece, and in other close degrees of consanguinity. This form of love was frequently expressed in ancient Greek by the words *ἔρως, ἐράω, ἔραμαι* (noun and verbs, transliterated *eros, erao, eramai*, Latin *amor, amo*). This was one of the commonest and most characteristic uses of this group of words. It was not their only use, however; and the other Greek words for "love" (to be given later) also were used for sexual love, each presenting it from a different angle. The *eros* words present love as *passion*, and thus are appropriately and frequently used to describe the passionate love grounded in sex. But they might also be used of any love which was, or was conceived to be, of an ardent, intense, passionate nature. Thus these words were used on occasion of the *ardent* love of children for their mother, and of friends for a friend; and even of ardent love of men for God,—as one might speak in English, with all purity and propriety, of having a *passion* for God (cf., the thought in Ps. 42:1, 2). The New Testament has not much to say directly of sexual love in its pure

forms, and does not use the words of the *eros* group at all.

2. A second form of love is "*natural affection*," i. e., the love grounded in natural or social relations, and expressive of "the inner life of the heart which belongs to man by nature" (Schmidt). This love is inherent in man's nature and the conditions of his life as a social being, and appears as "a natural movement of the soul — as something almost like gravitation or some other force of blind nature" (Warfield). This is a love which has nothing to do with sex. It grows out of such relations as those of blood kinship or common nationality. It is the "love" which should be felt by every member of a natural or social group for every other member. It involves a recognition of common interests with others, due to being bound up with them in common relations in life; and elements of sympathy, esteem, and affection, and in some of its forms much of tenderness. In its proper character it is a noble and indispensable "love" in the life of humankind.

The words commonly used by the Greeks to express this species of love were *στοργή*, *στέργω* (noun and verb, transliterated *storge*, *stergo*). These words present love from the angle of its *naturalness*. They might on occasion be used of any form of love (as the sex love), which they presented from their own peculiar point of view as *natural*. And other Greek words for love were used of the love of natural affection, when presenting it from some other point of view than that of its naturalness. But the use of the *storge* words was the typical one. The

Greeks employed these words to express the mutual love of parents and children; the natural affection between brothers and sisters; the "love" of king for people and people for king; the affection between a mother country and her colonies; occasionally the love of friend for friend; even the love of dogs for their master.

The cases just cited are typical examples of this kind of love. In the relations indicated, and other similar relations, this love ought to exist as a natural and kindly affection, suitable and beneficent, and altogether to be expected and desired. Its worthiness and natural obligatoriness are felt when we think what its absence would mean. In such absence the fundamental claims of members of natural or social groups upon each other, such as those of blood kinship or common nationality, or indeed common humanity, would be disregarded, and life would become cold and hard and inhuman. The Greek term *astorgos*, "without natural affection," implies a condition of heart that is unnatural and monstrous. The New Testament associates persons in this condition with covenant-breakers and the implacable and unmerciful (Rom. 1:31, 2 Tim. 3:3).

Only the stem of the *storge* words is found in the New Testament, and only three times, in compound words which are always well translated in the A. V.: *astorgos*, "without natural affection" (Rom. 1:31, 2 Tim. 3:3), *filostorgos*, "kindly affectioned" (Rom. 12:10).

3. The third form of love we are to consider is the love of *fondness*, of *warm personal attachment*,

of *tender affection*. This love is grounded in affinity of spirit and in the attractiveness of the one loved to the one who loves. It is the love of liking (if the expression may pass), the attitude of soul toward what is perceived to be agreeable and affords pleasure. This love presupposes that the one who loves finds pleasure in, takes delight in, the one loved. What we call friendship is one of its commonest and most typical varieties.

To express this kind of love, the Greeks commonly used the terms *φιλία*, *φιλέω* (noun and verb, transliterated *filia*, *fileo*, Latin *amicitia*, cf. also *φίλος*, *filos*, "friend," Latin *amicus*). These terms had other uses also; in fact the *filia* words were the most general terms for love in the Greek of the classical period, and were applied to every kind and degree of love, but always from their own special angle or point of view, that of pleasure or delight. This love of personal affection might also be described by other words for "love," if it were desired to present it from some other point of view than that of delight. But the *filia* words represent the characteristic mode of expressing this third type of love at the time the New Testament was written.

The love of warm personal affection when worthily bestowed is an eminently noble form of love. It appears on suitable occasions in the New Testament, expressed by the *filia* words in their typical sense. Consider the implications of the tender *filoi*, "friends," of John 15:15. See also the tender personal affection of John 11:3, 36 (contrast 11:5), and John 20:2 (contrast 21:7, 20). Also

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John 21:15-17, Titus 3:15, 1 Cor. 16:22, John 16:27, John 5:20, where the terms are used with special implications to be discussed later, but always with the implication of warm personal affection. This form of love appears relatively infrequently in the New Testament, being usually supplanted by the fourth form of love, next to be considered.

4. The fourth form of love that claims our attention is the love of *esteem* or *appreciation*, a love grounded in the sense of *worth* of the one loved. It is the love which *values* or *prizes* its object, and regards this object as *dear* or *precious*. This is a highly complex and variable form of love, now one element and now another being more prominent in it. But it is a perfectly distinct and highly important form of love, indeed for our purpose the most important form of love; and we shall attempt later to define it quite fully.

To express this form of love the appropriate Greek words were *ἀγάπη*, *ἀγαπάω* (noun and verb, transliterated *agape*, *agapao*, Latin *dilectio*). In Greek usage these words had a wide range, being applied to almost any form of love, though of course carrying with them their special implications. But they were etymologically and intrinsically noble words for love, the noblest in the Greek language; and could have acquired base associations only with difficulty. It is no accident that these words were chosen by the writers of the New Testament to express the lofty idea of Christian love. They were the best and purest words available.

The love *agape*, from the New Testament point

of view, may be described as a lofty, unselfish esteem and good-will, a benevolent and kindly disposition toward one, a love which regards one as of value and precious, and for that reason deliberately chooses one as the object of its kindly beneficent activity, and wills and actively promotes his highest good. The element of warm personal affection characteristic of the love *filia* is not prominent in *agape*, may indeed be entirely lacking. And yet *agape* is *love*, and may be intense and passionate with all the intensity which a sense of infinite value and preciousness in its object may produce. In the love *agape* the value and preciousness are recognized, not in a cold, detached, impersonal way, but as a matter of *deep personal concern*; if I love (*agapao*), the one loved is *dear*, appears as of value and precious, to *me*. Whatever other elements may be involved in the love *agape*, in New Testament and Christian usage its distinguishing characteristic is a *lofty spiritual good will*, grounded in a sense of value or worth, disposing one kindly toward another, and causing him to wish and will and so far as possible promote the other's highest well-being. This special form of love is the highest and noblest of all loves; and is the distinctive mark of the Christian, see John 13:35 "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have *love (agape)* one for another." Also see 1 John 4:8a, "He that loveth not knoweth not God"; and 1 Cor. 13:1-3.

The words *agape* and *agapao*, noun and verb, are very common in the New Testament, being found there about two hundred forty times, to express (1)



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the love of God for men, (2) the love of men for God, and (3) the love of men for each other. *Filia* and *fileo*, in the sense of personal "love," occur less than twenty times. So *agape*, in the New Testament sense of the word, is the great distinctive New Testament and Christian *love*, and as such is worthy our careful study.

We have now passed briefly in review four main kinds of love: (1) the love based in sex, erotic love; (2) the love of "natural affection"; (3) the love of warm personal affection ("friendly" love); (4) the love of esteem, appreciation, and lofty goodwill. In this review it has become apparent that, from the New Testament point of view, the forms of love that chiefly concern us are the third and the fourth, those expressed in the New Testament by *filia*, *fileo*, and *agape*, *agapao*, respectively. These two we must now describe more fully, and bring out their diverse nature and implications, as they appear in the New Testament (to whose usage our attention will now be mostly confined).

The third love, *filia*, *fileo*, warm personal affection, fondness, friendship, is a love grounded in the *attractiveness* of its object; has in it more of sense and emotion, less of active intelligence and deliberate choice; is more dependent on personal presence and association; and is determined largely *from without* (i. e., by the perceived attractiveness of the loved object, which attractiveness determines the love).

The fourth love, *agape*, *agapao*, in the New Testament sense, a lofty spiritual benevolence, is a love grounded in the disposition and attitude of soul, i. e.,

in the *character*, of the one who loves, and thus is independent of the attractiveness of its object; it has in it little or nothing of sense and emotional inclination, but is a matter of deliberate intelligent choice and will; is independent of personal presence and association; and is determined almost wholly *from within* (i. e., by the nature of the one who loves).

These considerations (to which others will be added later for the fourth love, *agape*, discriminate the two kinds of love under consideration clearly from one another, and make it plain that *filia* depends largely on the object of the "love," i. e., in the main is *objectively* determined; while *agape* is an outgrowth and expression of the loving person's character and spiritual disposition, and thus is almost entirely *subjectively* determined. This is especially true of the New Testament and Christian *agape*. But in any case what elements of worth shall be discerned in another, and what estimate shall be put upon them, and what attitude shall be assumed toward that other, depend almost entirely upon the nature and disposition of him who does the discerning and forms the estimate.

The relatively sensuous (by which is not meant sensual) quality of the love *filia*, and the non-sensuous quality of *agape*, may be illustrated by certain facts of Greek and New Testament usage. (1) A *kiss* is termed a *filema*, Rom. 16:16, 1 Cor. 16:20, Luke 22:48, etc., but never an *agapema* (although *agape* may be the motive to a *filema*, 1 Pet. 5:14);

and *to kiss* (verb) is *filein*, Mark 14:14 etc. And in modern Greek *fileo* has come to have no other meaning than to kiss. (2) Pleasure is a sensuous thing, and "pleasure-loving" is expressed in Greek, as we should expect, by *filedonos*, 2 Tim. 3:4, cf. *filoinos*, "fond of wine" (Plato, etc.); while *agapedonos*, *agapoinos*, owing to the non-sensuous character of the love *agape*, would be fairly unthinkable compounds! (The Greek *filotheos*, "loving God," 2 Tim. 3:4, etc., presents no difficulty, as the idea expressed here is doubtless the relatively sensuous one "fond of God.") (3) The love *filia* implies personal presence and association, suggested by the usage of the word, and by the ideas *delight in*, *fondness*, *cherishing*, *treating affectionately*, *welcoming* in a friendly manner (as a guest), *showing* signs of love (by caressing, kissing, etc.), and other ideas which the word carries with it; while *agape*, especially in N. T. usage, is rather alien to these connotations (also to be rejected Mark 10:21, where *agapao* means "love," not "kiss," nor "treat courteously"), and is not dependent on personal presence and association.

But here we must take account of the degeneration of words in their usage; and sometimes also of their elevation. In later literary Greek the word *agape* was sometimes debased in sense, especially in comedy (as Aristophanes) and satire (Lucian), and applied to the sexual love. And this was apparently so very early in colloquial Greek, judging by Septuagint usage. We must expect this in any lan-

guage. Evil-minded men may prostitute noble words to base uses, and thus contaminate and degrade their signification and implications, their atmosphere of thought and suggestion. And this may be done so fully that a word which once carried with it only good associations may have to be dropped from good usage. One time I jestingly asked a fine and well-educated young Japanese friend of mine what the Japanese word for *darling* is. After thinking for a moment, he replied, with a shade of sadness on his face, "We never use that, or other terms of endearment, in good society in Japan; for all such words in our language have been used in connection with prostitution and other forms of impurity until their associations are evil." Whether this statement of the case for Japan be entirely accurate or not, it is true that in any language a word once pure and noble in all its suggestions and associations may be debased to the vilest applications by vile-minded men, or by careless colloquial use. And our noble word *agape* has not escaped, as its use in later literary Greek shows. Probably also in colloquial usage all the time, and jestingly or euphemistically, the word was applied to uses which were more or less alien to its real signification. For example, a *dainty dish* was called an *agapema*, a "love" of a dish!

But it is also true that words sometimes are elevated and purified in the course of their history; and this is especially likely to be the case when Christianity is introduced, with its body of noble ideas and its pure and exalted tone and sentiment.

Christianity tends to have a purifying and spiritualizing influence on any language into which it is conveyed by evangelization and especially by translation of the New Testament. To make a language, or a word, the vehicle for conveying Christian ideas is to elevate that language or that word. So the originally noble words *agape* and *agapao* were exalted and spiritualized by being adopted by the early Christians and especially the writers of the New Testament to express the idea of *Christian love*. This exalted and holy idea lifted the words used to express it up to its own high level of thought and feeling. And in the New Testament, and in Christian use, with which alone we were now especially concerned, these words always carry with them pure and exalted associations, and tend to ennoble the mind which steeps itself in their atmosphere of thought and sentiment.

And now we are ready to begin tracing the use and implications of the *agape* words in the New Testament. These are the words always used in the New Testament of the love of men for God. No other terms would be so appropriate. Every implication of sense or of equality must be kept out of the expression of this love. And so *fileo* is never used. (The sensuous *filotheos* of 2 Tim. 3:4, as explained above, is used by way of accommodation to the sensuous *filedonos* of the same phrase.)

When God is said to have loved the world, John 3:16, etc., the word used is *agapao*; for *fileo* would be quite inappropriate. God could not love the sinful hostile world with *affection*; it was not per-

sonally *attractive* to Him; but He did love it with an unselfish and gracious *benevolence*, which led Him to will its well-being and salvation. So the customary New Testament terms to express the love of God for men are the *agape* words. They imply that He perceives the *worth* of immortal souls, created in His own image, with all their wondrous possibilities, and esteems them as of value and "precious" in His sight, and so desires and plans their salvation and blessedness. This estimate of men, however, and attitude toward and concern for them on God's part, depend rather on what *He* is than on anything in them.

We are commanded to "Love the Lord thy God," Mark 12:30f. But one cannot command an emotion or an affection. Is the command then unreasonable? No, for the love required is *agape*, the love of reason and will and definite moral choice. To love with the love *agape*, one *fixes* his love upon another, *chooses* that other as the object of his love. And this he does intelligently, deliberately, by his own self-controlled personal choice. To love God in the New Testament sense is to *appreciate* Him as *God* and *choose* Him as *our* God, and to dispose ourselves to fulfill toward Him all the duties involved in His being *God* and *our* God.

Jesus commanded us to *love* our *enemies*, Matt. 5:44. Now we cannot love them with personal affection; they are not agreeable to us, contemplation of them does not afford us pleasure. But we can love them with the lofty unselfish spiritual benevolence that wishes them all real good. We

may love them in this way — *agapao* — even when we know that their repentance and reformation are necessary before we can instate them in a position of moral approval. Christian love (*agape*) is not conditioned on the rightness of its object. But it will impel the one who loves to take all possible steps to effect the rightness of its object. *Love* cannot unconcernedly see its object continue wrong, but must seek his restoration.

*Agape*, the high spiritual love, as we should expect, is that which is almost always predicated of the Father God toward Jesus His Son, as John 15:10, 17:26. Only once is *fileo* used, John 5:20, and there appropriately, to express the *tender affection* of the Father for the Son. It is this tender affection that explains the *loving intimacy* of the Father with the Son, to whom He “shows all things that He Himself doeth.” Cf. similar loving intimacy of Jesus with his tenderly loved disciples, His “friends,” *filoi*, John 15:15.

The highest form of love known to man is of course *Agape*, in the New Testament sense of the term. It is almost always in the New Testament the love that is predicated of God for men, of men for God, and of men for each other. It is the love that receives such exalted praise in the great love chapters of the New Testament, 1 Cor. 13 and 1 John 4:7-21. It is the love the example of which is set for us by God himself,— an example we ought to imitate, 1 John 4:11.

In a few exceptional cases in the New Testament, however, the standard love, *agape*, is not the one

predicated, but the love *filia*. These cases of departure from the standard usage call for a word of explanation. Occasionally a high spiritual form of *personal affection*, involving warmth and tenderness, and personal attractiveness of the one loved to the one who loves, is in the mind of the New Testament writer; and then the appropriate term is *fileo*, which is used on such occasions instead of the standard *agapao*. Such instances are found in 1 Cor. 16:22, John 11:3, 36, 15:13-15, where the reciprocal *affection* of Christ and his "friends" (*filoi*) is in view, making *fileo* (*filos*) the appropriate term. Also according to John 16:27 the Father "loves" (*fileo*) Christ's disciples, as they have "loved" (again *fileo*) Christ. In both cases the element of personal attractiveness is present as the basis of the love, hence *fileo* is used as the appropriate term. On the other hand God does not and could not love the world or sinners with the love *filia*, though He loves both with the love *agape*. But where *filia* begins between Christ and his disciples, or on God's part toward Christ's disciples, or on the part of one Christian brother toward another (as Titus 3:15), it does not follow that *agape* has therefore ceased. Far from it!

This raises the interesting question as to the possible *co-existence* of the various forms of love. In fact most of the forms may on occasion co-exist. For example, God both *agapao* and *fileo* the disciples of Christ, the latter love being a development after they became disciples, the former existing both before and after. A friend *fileo* his friend, but at the



same time ought to *agapao* him, too. A brother may love his sister, or a mother her son, with the three loves, *storge*, *filia*, and *agape*; but not with *eros*, in the sexual sense. Husband and wife ought to love each other with three loves — *eros*, *filia*, and *agape*; and even *storge* might be added here from the social point of view, although not to be expected from that of blood-kinship. And so of many other possible illustrations. The various types of love may properly co-exist, if their co-existence would be consistent with their nature. Where they are incompatible, as *eros* in the sexual sense is incompatible with *storge* in the forbidden degrees of consanguinity, their co-existence is morally wrong, perhaps in the nature of the case impossible. Thus *eros*, passion based on sex, may be utterly inconsistent with *agape*, the love that is unselfish and wills the highest good of the one loved. And the friendship that involves no more than *filia* is not yet made perfect; for *agape* should be added to ennoble both characters and enrich and exalt the friendship. Many of the sins of men result from violation of the requirements of one or more of the forms of love of which we have been speaking. There would be no incest were the appeal of *storge* always heeded. *Filia* should cure one forever of selfishness. But the supreme moral appeal of the love *agape* prevents more sins than any other single motive felt by man. This great love is designed to lift one above all impurity, selfishness, indifference, neglect of others. It furnishes one with a standard of conduct and character, and a mighty motive to live up to the

standard. Anything that is incompatible with *agape* is *wrong*. We should mark this well, and order our lives accordingly. By so doing we shall tend both negatively (Rom. 13:10) and positively (Matt. 7:12, Luke 10:36, 37) to meet the requirements of the Christian standard of life and duty.

A most remarkable case of distinction between *filio* and *agapao* is found John 21:15-17. Here when Christ asks Peter if he loves Him with the high love *agape*, Peter feels himself able to claim only the lower love of tender personal affection (*filia*), and is deeply grieved (vs. 17) when Christ seems to question his having even this lower form of love. Of this incident Cremer says: "We cannot suppose that Peter wishes to over-bid the Lord's question by his answer, when he puts the love of personal affection in place of the resolute love of his will which the question demanded. Rather, humbled by the Lord's question, he will not venture to claim the love which Jesus seeks. Jesus then humbles him still further . . . by his third question, which takes up the disciple's answer and drives home to his mind its significance."

*What then is the love agape, in the New Testament and Christian sense?* This question we may answer in two ways.

1. In itself, or viewed as to its characteristic content, the Christian *agape* is a *lofty spiritual benevolence*, that desires and wills the highest well-being of all, and impels one to endeavor to bring about this well-being. It is a favorable and kindly disposition toward its object, and involves and carries with it,

so far as in each case such elements would be appropriate, sentiments of appreciation, kindly regard, esteem, respect, admiration, veneration, reverence, and an inclination to fulfil all obligations toward the one loved. Thus the total disposition of soul which we call Love (*agape*) is exceedingly rich and complex, always so, but in some cases involving more elements than may be present in other cases. E. g. in love of God more of *reverence* is present than is called for in love of our fellowmen. The elements that go to make up what we call love are not necessarily all present in any given case; rather such ones only of them are present in each case as would be suitable and appropriate in that case. But the supreme and determining factor in the Christian *agape*, the indispensable element, that which is always present and makes the love what it is, is the benevolence described at the beginning of this paragraph. This love is opposed to all indifference and neglect, and involves kindly interest, "loving" concern, and beneficent activity. And it finds its satisfaction and happiness in bringing its benevolent desires to realization.

It is in accord with the nature of this love (*agape*) that it "worketh no ill to its neighbor" (Rom. 13:10), yea, rather that it worketh all possible good to him (Matt. 5:45-47, 7:12, Luke 10:25-37). The Christian *agape* is the great unselfish ethical love. Other forms of love may be unethical, or may contain an element of self-interest; but by its very nature the Christian *agape* is disinterested and altruistic, and is absolutely pure ethi-

cally. Other forms of love may play their part in promoting *un*-ethical ends, as the sexual *eros* often does, and *storge* and *filia* occasionally. But the Christian *agape*, because of its lofty spiritual purity, *cannot* will or promote the unethical. Only the pure-and-good is compatible with this love, which by the very force of its nature is prevented from desiring or promoting aught but the good. And it promotes the good as a *means* to the realization of the highest well-being of the one who is loved.

2. Viewed psychologically, *agape* is a *sentiment*, a relatively permanent emotional attitude toward other persons, determined by certain general habits of mind or customary tendencies of thought, and subject to the psychic laws which regulate the relation of disposition, emotion, and volition. By way of illustration we may name friendship, patriotism, enmity, hate, etc., as common sentiments. A sentiment is an attitude of spirit, a *disposition*. As such it is an element of character. One's sentiments are immensely important in his life, for they predispose him to certain emotional reactions in presence of the facts of life; and these emotions along with the disposition that lies behind them impel him almost irresistibly to corresponding lines of action. One's sentiments deeply color and largely determine his life. Hence the immense importance of having richly developed in one's character such a sentiment as the Christian *agape*, the great altruistic love. In the Christian individual, *agape*, Christian *love*, is the distinctive and indispensable element of character. *Love (agape)* is also the most distinctive element in

the character of God, who "is love," 1 John 4:8b, 16b; and who is also our supreme exemplar of character, 1 John 4:11, Matt. 5:48, 1 Pet. 1:15, 16. To *love* (*agapao*), in the New Testament sense, is to be *God-like*.

The above being true of the nature of Christian love, it follows that this love is *permanent*, as enduring as Christian character, as immortal as the saved soul, as eternal as God himself (see 1 Cor. 13:8-13, 1 John 4:8).

It also follows that this love is *universal* in its range, i. e., includes all being in its scope. Seeing it is *self-determined*, a quality and an expression of one's nature, an element of his character, this love is for *all*. One loves (*agapao*) as the sun shines, by the very force of his nature. And the love, like the sunshine, is for all who do not hide themselves from its warmth and light and comfort. Where this love exists it is no more dependent on the quality or attractiveness of the persons who are its object than the shining of the sun depends on the character or merit of the men on whom the beams fall. God loves the unthankful and evil, and expects us to do the same, Matt. 5:43-48. This does not mean, however, that we should treat the evil as if they were good. Love may require their restraint and punishment, for their own good and the safety of others. But, if the love (Christian *agape*) exists at all, it includes the evil as well as the good; for it is for *all*. And by its very nature it wills and aims to promote the highest well-being of all.

This universal scope of the Christian *agape* is well

expressed in the *absolute* use of the verb *agapao* in certain New Testament passages. By its absolute use is meant its use without an object. In such use all emphasis is on the *love*, which is presented as existing irrespective of any object. Since love is an attitude of spirit, a *disposition*, of the one who loves, it may conceivably exist in the total absence of any object to love. The sun would shine were there nothing to shine on. God, whose nature is love (1 John 4:8b, 16b), no doubt had the disposition of *love* before creation, when He alone existed.

The absolute use of *agapao* is found in certain places in the New Testament, as follows (with the translation the proper emphasis also is so far as possible indicated; note absence of any object with the verb *love*):— 1 John 3:14c (in the true text), “he who loveth not abideth in death.” 1 John 4:7c, “Every one who loveth hath been begotten of God and knoweth God.” 1 John 4:8a, “He who loveth not knoweth not God.” And especially 1 John 4:19a, “*We love, because He first loved us*” (no emphasis on the “us”). Here the lack of object with the verb *love* is highly suggestive. It is not said that one loves this or that person, but just that he *loves*. The case is presented entirely from the standpoint of the loving subject, without regard to any particular object. This is permissible because love (the N. T. *agape*) is not limited to any particular object, but is *universal* in its scope. The last example (1 John 4:19a) is particularly noteworthy because the universality of the love here spoken of is indicated not only by the absolute use

of the verb, but also by the following context (vs. 20). It is *false* to claim to love God while not loving man; or to claim to love man while not loving God. For *love* (the N. T. *agape*) is *universal*. *If one loves at all, he loves all*. This is another mark of distinction between *filia* and *agape*; the latter (in its N. T. sense) by its very nature is universal, the former equally by its nature is limited (we can love with personal affection only those who are *attractive* to us).

This thought of the *universality* of the N. T. *agape* is to be dwelt on, and its rich significance realized, if possible. If one *loves* at all, he loves *all*. *Love* will omit none from its benign regard, its beneficent activity. If any one fails of a share in its benefits, it is because by his own unloving and hateful attitude he excludes them from his life. *Love would* bestow her benefactions on *all*; but some render it impossible for her to do so in their case. It is one of the inexorable laws of God's moral universe that, however gracious and forgiving *Love* may be, she can fully and permanently bestow her blessings only on those who permit themselves to be assimilated to love's own quality. Those who would enjoy love's benefits as an abiding possession must themselves come to love. To be persistently *un-loving* is fatal, involving moral and spiritual ruin, and self-entailed exclusion from the character and the life which alone make happiness possible.

And here another important fact claims brief consideration. *Love* being a *sentiment*, is, the psychol-

ogists tell us, capable of cultivation and development. Thus Prof. J. R. Angell says: "The cultivation of any emotion tends as a rule still further to fix the disposition which it reflects." And Prof. William James declares: "There is no more valuable precept in moral education than this, as all who have experience know: if we wish to conquer undesirable emotional tendencies in ourselves, we must assiduously, and in the first instance cold-bloodedly, go through the *outward movements* of those contrary dispositions which we wish to cultivate." And he adds: "The reward of persistency will infallibly come." The great apostle of love, in his first epistle, speaks of a "*perfect love*," and of being "*made perfect in love*" (1 John 4:17, 18),—a mode of expression which implies stages in the development of love. One's love may be real though undeveloped. It is our business as Christians to *develop* our love and make it complete and perfect.

But *how* are we to do this? In accordance with the precepts of the psychologists, we answer: By giving the love we feel, feeble and poor though it be, *expression* in loving manner and word and act. To kill an infant love one needs but to refuse to act on it. "Refuse to express a passion, and it dies" (James). On the other hand, a sentiment or disposition is strengthened and deepened, and made more secure and permanent, by exercise and use. So of the sentiment or disposition we call love. By the daily practise of love we shall grow in love. By giving expression to such love as we may feel, by assiduously acting as if we loved, by the daily exer-



cise and practise of love, we shall develop our love, and finally be "made perfect in love." The alternative is to neglect the impulses of love, and to make a habit of acting on the *un-loving* and hateful sentiments of our natures, as many persons do, with results to character and life which are deplorable indeed. To develop fully the disposition of love, one must live the life of love. What we *do* forms our character.

Another matter here claims a moment's attention. Most of us are very unskilled and awkward in the expression of the love we really feel. We should seek to acquire tact and skill in expressing our love suitably and helpfully to all with whom we have to do. This is a matter worthy careful persistent thought and study. It should not be left to take care of itself — which would mean that it would not be taken care of. It is something we cannot afford to neglect. Only by thought and study can we attain a high degree of the *delicate courtesy* of love which withholds her always from "behaving unseemly" (1 Cor. 13:5a), and which evokes an answering love in the hearts of those with whom we deal. Such study will also go far toward aiding us in giving wholesome exercise to our sentiments of love, and thus bringing about their development, even unto perfection. As Christians, for the sake of others and for our own sake, we should make *the art of giving our love expression* a study, and seek to become gracious and effective in this art. And here again it is earnest, intelligent, love-motivated, persistent practice that will make perfect.

Finally, consider how beneficially a developed Love would react on all the experiences and activities of the religious life. One who *loves* God and men will be disposed to fulfil all duties toward them; and is not this the sum-toal of God's requirements for man? Love is the master motive to all performance of duty. Love is the spring of joy in all the experience of life. Love is the crowning glory of developed Christian character. Love it is that makes prayer most fervent and effective.

“ He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small,  
For the dear God who heareth prayer,  
He made and loveth all.”

Love is divine in origin and nature, and is divinely beneficent in the life of mankind. Love comes from God, love leads to God. Love assimilates the souls it rules to its own quality, and thus makes them God-like, and fits them for fellowship with God and with all the holy and good, for brotherly usefulness to brother man in the present life, and for eternal blessedness in the life to come.

“ Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for GOD IS LOVE.”











